



EHUOPC Meeting – 12th October 2026

Attendees:

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

The Meeting opened at 19:30 on Tuesday 12th October 2026 via Teams conferencing.

1. Apologies for Absence

Lee Barron, Charles Hallows, Hannah Harrison (HPP represented by DM), Louise Knipe

2. Minutes of 18th May 2026 Meeting

No matters arising not covered elsewhere in the meeting.

3. Updates from NPUA Exec/EHUSCC

NPUA Exec Update: SE

- Successful conference attended by 100+ members
- [2026/27 Start of Season Presentation](#) issued to members ahead of the league start including a rules update and video to support new [Aerial Ball](#) interpretation
- No increases in Membership fees for 26/27 agreed at AGM.
- New NPUA Exec members: Dawn Bonner, Vice Chair; Amar Chudasama, Exec member
- Fitness – a thank you to members for embracing the fitness guidelines. The second test window for N1, N2 and HPP opens on 1st December to 18th January. A reminder that watched tests are needed for any potential promotion from N3 to N2 or HPP prior to assessments
- WhatsApp community for NPUA activity continues to work well, with weekly 'Decision Time' to draw our 'learnings' from the clips and how to handle similar situations; Community includes announcement such as test venues and webinar dates for further development opportunities
- Rebecca Edwards now sits on the England Hockey National Games panel which discusses the national league.

Awards for 2025/26 Season:

Special Merit Award: David Ellcock

Graham Nash Umpire of the year: Nikki Butcher

Tex Lane Indoor Umpire of the year: Max Davidson

Chris Todd Umpire Support of the Year: Gary Stent

Jane Nockolds Young Umpire of the Year: Tanya Sargeant

Individual Panel Awards

Men's N1: David Monger

Men's N2: Ashley Freeman

Men's N3: Gregor Hofstede

Men's N4: Stephen Limbert Mason

Women's N1: Sophie Parker

Women's N2: Nikki Butcher

Women's N3: Daryl Sudworth

Women's N4: Daniel Thompson

HPP: Max Davidson



Discipline Reporting: Rebecca Edwards is now the new Discipline Officer for NPUA. Members are reminded to contact Rebecca prior to submitting discipline forms. Online reporting can be found on the EH website <https://www.englishhockey.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: LB

Thanks to Matt Harrison and Jonathon Hull for their work during the summer to develop the new national level Umpire Support pathway.

Next meeting will be help on October 19th.

3. Appointments Update (JW, JB, PM)

Sean thanked appointers for their work to manage the appointments in the first few weeks of the season where a number of factors have made the task very difficult. Members who have supported the programme with extra games were also thanked.

A meeting will be held with England Hockey and Area Appointers on October 14th to discuss general shortage challenges, particularly in the women's game.

BUCS:

Thanks to Julian Warburton for coordinating the Wednesday BUCs appointments again and to those umpires who support the competition. And a special mention to Julian for completing his 100th BUCs game on 7th October at Loughborough.

Domestic Tournaments in 2026/7:

We are awaiting a list of events and requirements from England Hockey so that planning can be made to support future tournaments. **ACTION: EH sends to SE**

EHL FIXTURE DATES 2026/27

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.



5. Umpire Support (JH, MH)

Appointments (up to and including 11th October)

- Umpire Support: 45
- Umpire Support Candidate: 15
- Umpire Support Mentor: 15
- Umpire Support Assessor: 0

Candidates (panel: 20) & Mentors (panel: 18)

- All candidates that have been available have received at least one appointment in the first three weeks of the season. Mentor reports have generally been positive with a theme of more exposure to further mentor appointments required in most cases. Assessments will be arranged as and when candidates are fully ready and able to operate independently.
- Thank you to the mentors who have taken appointment so far, particularly those who have seen quite a few of our candidates. Overall mentor availability hasn't been great for a variety of reasons, including several of the team with long-term injuries and post-surgical recovery. We have less than half of our mentors available on any given weekend (avg. for Sep & Oct: 40%), which is restricting how many candidates can be appointed. However, this should improve over the coming weeks.
- Candidates are being encouraged to take area appointments on the weekends where we are unable to provide a NPUA appointment. This is happening in some cases and will help candidates to maintain their progress on developing their skillsets and ready themselves for assessment in due course.

US News

- Colin Crayford has retired from Umpire Support with immediate effect. However, Colin will continue to take match official appointments for TAP. Thank you, Colin for many years of service coaching umpires in the national league.
- Congratulations to Gary Stent on his Umpire Support of the Year award at the recent NPUA Conference, thoroughly well deserved. Gary undertook several UM appointments over the summer, including the TA Cup and School Games.
- GMS continues to prove troublesome with some reporting/feedback functions still not available for all matches. We await EH to complete the configuration and will advise the membership when this is complete.
- Welcome to new candidates, Steve Cronin and Andy Poulain.

Umpire Support milestones during 2026/27 (up to and including 29th September):

None

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 have not completed 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 with the wrong level test to an appropriate panel, and if not completing 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 = 22 umps)

Panel Updates:

None

Louise Knipe (W N1 = 17 umps)

Panel Updates:

None

Gary Stent (M N2 = 22 umps)

Panel Updates:

Mike McCartney is moved to reserve panel.

Ann Hopkins (W N2 = 16 umps)

Panel Updates:

Stuart Freeman retired from umpiring during the summer and is thanked for his long service to NPUA.

Mike McCartney is moved to reserve panel.

David Monger (HPP = 17 umps)

Panel Updates:

The panel welcomed Kirsty Dymond and Charlotte Royle

Sam Krasner, Josh Perry, Luke Rees were moved to the men's reserve panel

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 = 32 umps)

Panel Updates:

The panel welcomes Nora Struchtrup

Matty Smith is returned to N3 following a short break

Debbie Garner (W N3 = 23 umps)

Panel Updates:

The panel welcomes Samantha Denehy-Johnson

Paul Sexby retired from umpiring in the summer and is thanked for his service. Paul continues to be a member of NPUA in his capacity as Umpire Support

Daryl Sudworth retired from umpiring in the summer and is thanked for his many years of service.



Charles Hallows (M N4 = 33 umps)

Panel Updates:

The panel welcomes Ed Cade and Muiris Capon-Telford

Ben Nicholls is returned to N4 following a short break

Mark Everard (W N4 = 30 umps)

Panel Updates:

The panel welcomes Vicky Benedikz and Anna Luxton

Simon Gillett (Candidates = 9)

Since the last meeting, following assessments we have 7 new L3s:

Kirsty Dymond and Charlotte Royle to HPP; Ed Cade and Muiris Capon-Telford to M N4; Vicky Benedikz and Anna Luxton to W N4

Following assessment:

Nora Struchtrup has been transferred to M N3 panel and Samantha Denehy-Johnson to W N3

Retirements from 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:

None

Jane Hallett was returned to men's reserve panel

Milestones

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

Tony Rollins – 300

Bob Jordan – 100

Adam Nelson – 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:

Viv Carveth and Mia Dewing on achieving their FIH International badge

Congratulations to our UMS:

Matt Harrison on achieving FIH International UM status

7. AOB

In case members are not aware, GMS runs on an App called 'Run Sports App' where members can see their fixtures and amend availability. It is available in the App store.



8. Date of next meeting:

December 15th **ACTION: LP to send invitation**

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 21:55 with thanks to attendees for their hard work on behalf of NPUA