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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT - BOLDLY GOING.....

It's a bit late now, but if I've not seen you since January 1st, Happy New Year to you!

We're beyond the half-way point of another season and our members have been on good form throughout the country. Whether it's umpiring a club game with lots of new hockey participants, or a National Premier League game, our members have kept the sport going and will of course continue to do so over the months that remain to the end of the season.

There have been a couple of hiccups along the way, some grouches from players but in the vast majority of cases Yorkshire Hockey Umpire Association members continue to perform well and contribute hugely to the enjoyment of players nationwide.

Please remember that this association exists to encourage all umpires, whether you're a candidate preparing for your level 1 umpires award, a regular club umpire or one of those operating in the various neutral appointment schemes, we are here to help and represent you. If you have any queries about umpiring or concerns about your treatment by the teams or players, please contact us. We've also been able to do some coaching of our neutral scheme umpires and will again be holding coaching sessions in springtime when the various tournaments appear in our region. Please watch out for those and try to make yourself available, the coaches can really help your game and being amongst umpiring colleagues can help umpires appreciate that you're not alone.

We're always looking for new additions to the neutral appointments schemes and we're investigating various ways of getting our club umpires, many of whom we know are well capable of umpiring at that level, to give some of each season to the schemes and maybe then moving into neutral scheme umpiring regularly. We know it's not for everyone and we know that clubs are often hard pressed to cover their own games without losing their better umpires to the scheme. But we have taught well over 70 candidates per year for a number of years now the written part of their level 1 course and this increase of new umpires should hopefully free up a few more to spend at least some of their time on scheme appointments. If you fancy a go at it please contact me. We'll be contacting clubs directly in the summer about further developments in this regard. There's some weighty but hopefully interesting stuff in Whistler this month so please have a read and I look forward to seeing you at grounds around the county and, if not before, at the AGM on Thursday, 18th Apr 2013

Or, the end of season dinner
(see last page).

Chris Bowers
President YHUA



ARE YOU COVERED?

A QUICK REMINDER TO ALL THOSE WHO UMPIRE IN ANY CAPACITY - AS A CLUB UMPIRE, YOU WILL BE COVERED BY YOUR OWN CLUB'S INSURANCE FOR THEIR GAMES.

IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER OF YHUA, AND YOU UMPIRE FOR ANY OTHER CLUB (WHERE YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER) YOU ARE NOT INSURED.

IS IT WORTH THE RISK?

JOIN YHUA FOR £15/YEAR - AND GET COVERED!!

Not a Member of YHUA? Are you covered? Join now! See contact details.

Umpires responsibilities and rules relating to cards

There have been instances this season and no doubt in every season since Adam was a lad where umpires have been unaware of the full extent of the tools available to them in controlling the people on and around the pitch. I hope that what follows here will serve as a reminder and clarify how we can control the game so that the players, spectators and, not least, ourselves as umpires enjoy the game in which we're involved.

First let's deal with cards and their use with players.

We have three cards available and they are used to control the players and the "temperature" of a game. To explain, "temperature" can perhaps be seen as the level of excitement/tension that exists in the game. Games often go through phases, usually starting off neutral and perhaps seeing the temperature rise when a series of incidents lead one team to become annoyed or vengeful and then see the temperature going down again when an umpire makes good use of voice, body-language and maybe cards to settle the game down again.

The so called "control curve" (which shows how we slide up the curve in increasing our control level in response to the temperature of the game) begins with use of voice and body-language and the higher up the curve we go as the temperature rises, so we progress through green and yellow cards and ultimately, if the players are not learning, to our red card.

The green card  carries no immediate penalty other than to warn the player that we've noticed his/her antics and that any further indiscretion on his/her part will attract a different coloured piece of plastic. It also sends out a message to both teams that a line has been drawn and we are unwilling to allow things to deteriorate further without penalty. As a guide, it is unlikely that more than 2 green cards will be given to each team, since, having received two cards and continued to misbehave, a team is clearly not learning and it is usually necessary at that stage to turn to yellow. It is also less likely, by the way, that a green card will be given in the last quarter of a game where there have been previous cards. It is much more likely in the last 10 or 15 minutes of a game that a yellow card will be shown. This is often the most important and decisive part of a game and so people are probably a bit more cynical in the fouls they commit, having one eye on a result.

The yellow card  is for more serious offences, such as deliberate break down of play, poor or malicious tackling etc, and also for dissent towards the umpire. Don't forget in this last regard that dissent is not only verbal. The player laughing at a decision you've made, or shaking his head at you in seeming disbelief is committing dissent. I'm not suggesting that the first time it happens you should reach for your cards.

On the contrary, I firmly believe that our job is primarily to manage the players so that they stay on the field. However, if a player or players from a team have been putting pressure on an umpire by dissent then each umpire must decide how much of that he will accept and we all have different levels of acceptance. Once that point has been reached you should produce a yellow card and remove the dissenter for a minimum of 5 minutes. Again this draws a line and makes it plain to the players that you will accept no more. A judicious word with the captain at this point is often a good idea and reminding him that unless he controls his team as required by the rules, you have it within your remit to yellow card him for his lack of control.

A yellow card is not restricted to 5 minutes (which is the minimum) but can in fact be as long as you think the offence deserves. If you've yellow carded a player for dissent and his colleague commits the same offence shortly thereafter, a yellow to that colleague of 10 minutes would not be unreasonable. Remember to make a note of the number of the player who received the card as you'll need to note it on the match result sheet for the league and you may also have cause to consult the numbers should the player commit a further cardable offence later in the game. Don't forget that if a player, already having received a yellow card for an offence, commits a similar offence later in the game then that player must receive a red card. It is possible for a player to receive two yellow cards in a game but they must be shown to him for two different offences. For example a player can receive two yellow cards if one was for dissent and the other for a break-down of play.

Red cards:  A straight red card is given for a series of offences all of which are serious in nature and also, as outlined in the description of yellow cards, two yellow cards regularly equals a red. The straight red card decisions include, but are not limited to, serious foul play, physical violence attempted or achieved against a player or umpire, serious dissent to an umpire etc. A red card can only be given during a game – after the game an MMO (Match-day Misconduct Offence) or charge of bringing the game into disrepute can be used and they carry similar penalties. When a red card has been shown to a player he must leave the fenced area enclosing the pitch and his team must play with a man fewer for the remainder of the match. Red cards always carry a penalty of at least 16 days suspension from the game which will prevent the offender from playing, coaching or umpiring during that suspension. We must not, however, shy away from issuing a red card if it is warranted simply because we dislike the idea of a player missing the following two weeks of hockey. The use of cards is partly educational and players need to learn that any ill-conceived action will have personal consequences – it is the only way that some of them are made to realise that they must stay within the rules of the game.

A red card cannot be rescinded by the issuing umpire. If a red card is issued, the Red Card Report Form (downloadable from the England Hockey website) must be completed and sent to the county or regional (depending upon which league the game was being played in) disciplinary officer within 24 hours of the game. It is usually best to fill in the report immediately after the game so that the details are not forgotten.

When a player commits an offence after the game then the same procedure is followed but an MMO form is completed. At the time of the incident the umpire must inform the player and the team captain of his intention to issue an MMO.

If it is realised after the game that a red card has been issued to the wrong player ie mistaken identity then the form should still be sent to the relevant disciplinary officer with a covering note explaining the mistake that has been made.

It is most important that we report red cards and are not talked out of them in the cosiness of the bar after a game. The report form is non-negotiable, it follows on mandatorily after the red card has been issued.

Secondly, let's consider spectators at a game.

We regularly hear of umpires who have left the game because of dissent shown to them by players. Whilst understandable, as nobody likes giving up their afternoon to suffer the slings and arrows aimed at them by mouthy hockey players, the umpire has the tools in his arsenal to deal with those players as outlined above. Umpires are sometimes unaware as to what tools they have available when it comes to dealing with the crowd. It is great to have parents and club members at a hockey match as it creates an atmosphere which can benefit both players and umpires in their performance. However, when a member, or members of a crowd become aggressive towards an umpire it is unpleasant at best and intimidating or threatening at worst. The umpire has the ability to sort it out and should not be afraid of using that ability. It is rarely wise to become involved in conversation with the members of the crowd doing the moaning. They can say what they want without fear of reprisal, your comments can be used against you and also are a distraction to you and to the perception of the players as to your concentration on the game. The best way to deal with the matter is to stop the game, call over the captain of the home team and advise that since his club has a responsibility to maintain order at the ground, and since he is the club's representative on the pitch, he will be deemed in breach of the club's responsibility should he not sort out the crowd. Make it clear to him that if he fails to bring the crowd under control to your liking, you will be forced to yellow card him. You should then give him the opportunity to speak to the element in the crowd which is causing you a problem before re-starting the game. If the problem is not then sorted out, you must yellow card the captain and see that he gives the captain's armband to a fellow team member on the pitch. If the people in the crowd continue to cause you problems while the captain is off the pitch then simply yellow card his replacement and continue such action until the crowd is under control. It is more likely that, when the captain sees that you know how to deal with the problem, he will take the necessary action against the spectators and the game will continue in a happier fashion.

We are not there to be abused and we should deal with abuse properly and speedily from whichever direction it comes.

And that's it. If you've got this far, thank you for reading, I hope it helped. For those who didn't get this far in one go, I hope I've cured your insomnia.

Chris Bowers

Should you issue a red card or disrepute form please email the completed form to Ray Everitt, County Disciplinary Officer, within 24 hours of the offence.

It is useful to ask your fellow umpire also to send in a statement. Be aware that all parties receive all forms and statements, so please write in an objective, professional and factual manner.

Should you be unsure of procedures go to the England Hockey website and look at "Disrepute Incident Regulations" and "Red Card and MMO Regulations"; both documents are clear in advising correct procedures.

Should you be unable to find the documents Ray will happily email them to you.

For speed of procedure and outcome please send forms and statements by email to:

rayeveritt@blueyonder.co.uk

His phone and address details are also in the handbook.

Coming SOON....
To a pitch near you!
Well, Abbeydale actually!



Are you not coming to the dinner??



This year's end of season YHUA Dinner will be at the Aaskash Restaurant, Cleckheaton on 13th April at 7.30pm. It is a buffet menu, so no pre-orders required. If you want to attend please let either myself or Chris Blogg know - to book your places. Look forward to seeing everyone there.

If you would like to submit any articles, stories or photo's to the Whistler, please let me know @ joolaymc@hotmail.co.uk