

How MRHUA Outdoor Selection Operates

Becoming a Level 2 Umpire and a member of MRHUA

Nominations are received by the Men's and Women's Selection Committees. All candidates must, prior to nomination, have satisfactorily completed a fitness test to the levels required by MRHUA. The umpire is then appointed to a Midlands League Division 1 game or to another game of a similar standard approved by the relevant Selection Committee. The umpire will be watched by an Assessor from the Selection Committee or another approved person and must achieve an "Above Current Grade" mark. If the game is considered by the Assessor not to be a game of sufficient quality to provide a true test, then the umpire can be asked to do another game. Unsuccessful applicants are advised to return to their Association or County to gain more experience and then apply again.

If successful, membership of MRHUA will be ratified by the appropriate Selection Committee; the umpire will be graded as considered appropriate and registered as Level 2 with England Hockey.

Any umpire who is an active member of another Regional HUA, who wishes to join the Association, may be considered for membership without the need for nomination by a Constituent Association (as defined within the MRHUA constitution), provided that he/she applies for membership to the relevant Constituent Association prior to acceptance.

If an umpire on the Women's panel wishes to become a member of the Men's panel or vice versa, that Umpire must be assessed by the other section in order to obtain a Grading within that other section.

Midlands Grades

MRHUA has 3 standard levels or grades and every umpire is given a grade on reaching Level 2. These grades are used by the Appointment Secretaries to appoint umpires to games that suit their ability. The grades are defined as:

Grade 3. An umpire in the first band of our ability range, capable of umpiring Midlands League Division 1 games; some Cup, Plate or Trophy games; some Regional Tournaments and Schools or Youth higher age group events.

Grade 2. An umpire capable of umpiring Midlands Premier League games, if appointed with a Grade 1 colleague. Umpires at this level may also be appointed to some Cup, Plate or Trophy games and other Regional tournaments.

Grade 1. An umpire who has reached the highest standard in the Region, who is capable of Umpiring Midlands Premier League matches and any other games or events to which MRHUA appoints and who may be considered for nomination for promotion to Level 3. Grade 1 umpires are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of umpiring in the Region.

All Level 2 umpires are representatives of the MRHUA and should be considered as examples for other umpires to follow and must abide by the England Hockey Code of Ethics and Behaviour.

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The Review Process

The MRHUA Selection Committees meet at regular intervals with three meetings recommended each season, typically in the first half of November and February and after the end of the league season.

In preparation for each of these meetings, a summary of the Club website reports is prepared for each umpire. These tell us what our customers think of individual umpires and are used by the Selectors as a guide to how the Clubs rate the umpires they have had. The system on the website also provides a “Weighted Average” for each umpire so that the marks from Clubs that always mark low or high are adjusted. These reports give the Selectors an insight as to whether an umpire is doing well in the leagues they umpire, whether there are points that an umpire needs to work on and if the umpire needs coaching help.

A summary is also prepared of all the Selection reports received on each umpire by the Selection Committee. It is on these reports that a judgement is made on whether to promote the umpire to a higher grade, leave the umpire to gain more experience at the current grade or, in occasional cases, to return the umpire to a lower grade to allow time to consolidate and re-group.

Umpires tend to be watched more often if they are making rapid progress or are close to achieving the next grade up. Umpires being watched are not always grouped together and on occasions some umpires may receive extra watchings when the Selector is sent to look primarily at the umpire’s colleague.

As a general principle:

1. The Selection Committee will wish to see regular reports on an individual umpire with an assessment of ‘Umpiring above current grade’ in order to consider promotion or nomination to the next level.
2. To be considered for promotion an umpire must have satisfactorily completed a fitness test to the levels from time to time required by MRHUA. The test must have been completed within a twelve month period commencing on 1st June in any year.
3. To obtain promotion from Grade 3 to Grade 2 an umpire needs to be assessed as ‘above grade’ on Midlands Division 1 games or similar.
4. To obtain promotion from Grade 2 to Grade 1, an umpire needs to be assessed as ‘above grade’ on Midlands Premier Division games or similar.
5. To progress to Level 3, an umpire needs to be nominated by the Region. This can happen in two ways:
 - By nomination the umpire for inclusion in the National Programme Development Panel (NPDP) or
 - By nomination through the Candidate Programme

Umpires nominated for NPDP are those who MRHUA consider to have the potential to achieve Level 3 status within a period of two years and who meet the criteria for inclusion within NPDP. Current criteria and further details can be supplied on request. Candidates for the NPDP programme are nominated by the Regions in May/June, ahead of the forthcoming season. In exceptional circumstances, entry to NPDP will be allowed at other times during the year. NPDP personnel will be supported with coaching and mentoring throughout the programme for a period of up to two years.

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The Candidate Programme is aimed at those umpires performing at a standard which means they can give valuable service to the National Programme immediately. Such candidates will get a one off assessment game. This requirement is reflected in the higher pass mark mandated for Candidates of 5.50. Nominations will be accepted in May and November

6. In the unfortunate case of being downgraded an umpire will have received at least two consecutive assessment reports indicating 'disappointing' and/or 'Umpiring below grade' before the relevant selection committee shall make a decision to downgrade a member.
7. All umpires are expected to offer regular availability to MRHUA and/or a higher authority/association in order to maintain their grade.
8. All umpires returning to the Association after a lengthy period of inactivity or injury shall be assessed by an approved assessor before being returned to the association at an appropriate Grade, as determined by the the relevant Selection Committee.

In exceptional circumstances, the Selection Committee may, at its sole discretion, vary an umpire's grading without the necessary reports outlined in 1-7 above.

At the end of each season, each umpire is sent a report giving a consolidated view of what the Selectors feel the umpire has done well, the things the umpire should work on to improve and a summary of the Club's reports. The relevant Chair of Selectors is happy to discuss your End of Season Report if you feel that any comments made need enlarging. Any umpire who would like an interim verbal report during the season, should telephone the relevant Chair of Selectors who will be able to discuss the situation and pass on any relevant comments.

Appointments for individual matches

The relevant Appointments Secretary attends the Selectors meetings and uses the comments and decisions made by the Selectors to provide suitable appointments for each umpire for the next tranche of appointments. Not every umpire is available every week and our first priority is to provide umpires for all games. This inevitably means that umpires will not receive the perfect appointment every week. We must remember that we are here as servants of the game as well as for our own enjoyment.

If you feel that you are appointed to the same Club too often, please ring the relevant Appointments Secretary to discuss the issue.

Notwithstanding the publication of Appointments, the Selection Committee, through the relevant Appointments Secretary, may amend or change individual appointments if this is considered necessary.

It should be noted that in the case of emergencies or at short notice, Appointment Secretaries have the absolute discretion to appoint an umpire to a game that might be above that umpires grade.

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Appointments for Tournaments

The selectors identify the panels which are best suited to each tournament. Other factors in the mix which affect the final appointments made include a) the need to find the right blend of experience, potential and solidity for each tournament; b) the wish of the selectors to see more of umpires with identified potential; c) the desire to reward “stalwarts” who do a good job week in, week out; and d) the need to give umpires with upcoming higher level tournaments the best possible preparation.

Coaching

We like our umpires to ask for coaching if they think that this would help them to improve. These requests should be sent to the Secretary of the Coaching Committee.

Some of our umpires are happy at the level they have achieved and prefer not to be coached. Sometimes, Club reports and Selectors reports suggest that coaching would benefit some of our umpires. In these instances, the Selection Committee will recommend that the umpire receives some coaching.

Coaching reports are only seen by the umpire being coached, the coach and the Secretary of the Coaching Committee. They are not made available to the members of the Selection Committee.

In Conclusion

We seek to provide umpires with interesting and varied appointments for continued enjoyment of umpiring and a pathway to further success. Some of these appointments will test the umpire’s abilities and stimulate them to improve their umpiring. Some appointments are made because we need a more experienced umpire to help a colleague improve.

We are aware that on occasions it is difficult to judge whether individuals are able to make the step to the next level. The relevant Selection Committees therefore reserve the right to give certain individuals the opportunity to umpire games involving teams at a higher level when league points are not at stake.

As you improve we will watch you, coach you and when ready, upgrade you to a higher grade so that you can be appointed to faster and more competitive hockey. We want our umpires to enjoy their umpiring and we take care not to ask them to umpire a game too far above their ability as a disappointing performance can undermine confidence and is often not enjoyable. When promoted to a higher level, umpires will be given time to establish themselves at this new level and should not be unduly worried if an assessor is appointed soon after being promoted.