

SCB ACO APPOINTMENTS OFFICER REPORT TO 2009 AGM

I was delighted to accept the invitation from the Management Committee to fill the vacant post of Appointments Officer. I attended my first committee meeting last November and at that meeting it was agreed that all umpire and scorer appointments previously undertaken on a local or some other basis, will in future be undertaken centrally through the SCB ACO with myself, as Appointments Officer, being the primary point of contact.

Following consultation with Surrey Cricket, Surrey Senior Cricketers Association and the Surrey Schools Cricket Association, the SCB ACO will be responsible for appointing umpires in 2009 for:

- All Surrey County Age Group Boys teams from the Academy and U/19s right down to the Under 9s (except for U/17 County Championship & Cup matches where appointments are being made by the ECB RAC). *92 appointments made involving approximately 40 umpires;*
- Surrey U/11, U/12, U/13 & U/14 District Festivals that will be held at various venues in July & August - *80 appointments made using 31 umpires;*
- All Surrey County Age Group Girls teams from U/11 to U/17 age groups. *22 out of 30 appointments have been made involving 15 umpires but there is some difficulty covering all games due to a number of Saturday fixtures;*
- Surrey Schools Cricket Association Cup Finals - *details not yet known*
- Surrey Senior Cricketers Association Over 50s (*details to be confirmed*) and Over 60s County Championship matches. *7 umpires used for 30 Over 60s appointments.*

In view of the number of fixtures we are appointing for in 2009 and to capitalise on the expertise of those previously involved in the appointments process, I am indebted to Roger Croft, Bob McLeod and Ian Philippe for coordinating the appointments to the older County Age Groups (U/15 upwards), the Over 50s and Over 60s respectively.

New arrangements have been put in place for appointing umpires to the National Club Knockout ties in 2009: All appointments for the first 3 rounds will be made by the County ACO and from the Group Final (round 4) onwards the appointments will be made by the Regional Appointments Coordinators (RACs) with the ECB appointing for the Final. I have completed the appointments for the 7 Round 1 ties to be played in Surrey on 3 May and in view of the reduced number of clubs accepted this year (50% less than in 2008) only SCB ACO members on Surrey Championship Lists 1 & 2 were invited to officiate this year. However we will be able to offer a greater level of participation when the entry level reverts back to normal in 2010.

The SCB ACO is committed to the development of umpires and scorers in Surrey by providing opportunity for our members to officiate and enabling those who wish to progress their careers along the ECB umpiring and scoring pathway, particularly with the increasing number of representative and prestige appointments being made by the new ECB Regional Appointment Co-ordinators (RACs). In this respect we have recommended a group of 6 umpires for the U/17 County Championship and Cup panel. This was open to all Surrey Championship List 1 & 2 umpires and with more than half asking for their name to be put forward, it was an extremely difficult task to whittle the list down to the final 6 as everyone merited selection. However, as we were directed by the RAC to recommend a mix of established Premier Division umpires and emerging umpires, David Edwards (as SCB ACO Chairman) and myself (as SCB ACO Appointments Officer) agreed that we should apply the criteria of previous experience with county age groups at U/15 upwards, standing in at least 9 Premier / Division 1 SC games in 2008 and being available for National Knockout in 2009 which resulted in Roy Collins, Mick Martin, Ian Philippe, Jeremy Beckwith, Vernon Fallows and John White being recommended for 2009.

We have through Roger Croft and Graham Cooper also provided assistance to the RAC for appointing umpires to Surrey Women home fixtures in the revamped Women's County Championship and we will continue to work closely with the ECB Regional Coordinator for the benefit of SCB ACO members.

The SCB ACO is also committed to helping clubs and organisations find umpires and scorers either for the season or on a match-to-match or some other mutually agreed basis by operating a 'bureau' service.

Clubs and organisations are invited to e-mail their umpire and / or scorer requirements to the Appointments Officer for distribution via a central distribution list as well as being published on the SCB ACO website. Each club to set their own criteria with regard to minimum qualifications and/or experience and to agree fees/expenses with individual umpires and scorers. Whereas all SCB ACO appointments are only open to our members, these bureau vacancies are being made available to non-SCB ACO members, consequently individual clubs and organisations are being made responsible for checking CRB clearance, insurance cover and other such issues. However we are recommending to clubs and organisations that whenever possible they appoint ECB ACO members.

The bureau has only been up and running since late February and 8 clubs and organisations were featured on the "Appointment Opportunities" page during the first two weeks.

I am very conscious of the fact that we represent scorers as well as umpires and that to date most, if not all, of my work has centred on umpiring. In fact, scorers have had a very raw deal under the ECB set-up. I can only apologise for not addressing scoring appointment issues. Such are the demands on my time in dealing with umpiring matters, that I really do feel that the interests of scorers will be best served by having a separate Scorers Appointments Officer, who can fully concentrate on the needs of this most neglected and undervalued section of cricket officials.

John White
March 2009