



Chair's Thoughts



I never find writing my pieces for publication very easy and in these exceptional times it is even harder. We want to stay in contact and be useful, but what can we say or do? After today's extension to the 'lockdown' at best we may get

half a season but there is a realistic chance that the 2020 season will be cancelled. Does it matter? Well if you, or one of those close to you, is suffering badly or worse from the virus then probably not. Similarly if your income has been damaged by the lockdown probably not, but if you are in the front line or in isolation scared about what it might do to you, and those that are close to you, the prospect of returning to true normality with no risks is highly attractive.

We, the Surrey ACO, cannot make a big difference but like many we are trying to do our bit. We see the officials community as a family so if we can be of help please let me know and we will see what we can do (07565 422079 or dave.walter@ntlworld.com).

This winter the SACO had been working through the normal training activities and looking at how we can get more people involved in the Officiating community. Our training programme for Umpires and Scorers was progressing well until lockdown. We will pick things up when we are 'out the other side' which realistically is likely to be winter 2020/21.

2020 was scheduled to be the first year in a five year push to get more people involved in officiating, but planning has been rather stopped in it tracks as people focus on other priorities or are simply furloughed and not allowed to work. The programme includes keep doing what we do well, the established training programmes but also looks to focus on the following areas: Young, female and diverse community officials and generating officials

from the Dynamos program. The targets are quite aggressive, but that shows the importance of the project and all of the signed are that there will be resources to support this programme.

Some of the target areas were already areas that we are working on, but to be honest we were struggling so the national focus will be helpful. The most exciting development is in the Dynamos program (coaching for 9 to 12 years olds, the next step from All Stars) is that umpiring and scoring are an integral part of what the youngsters are taught. When they play their matches at training, they will take turns at umpiring and scoring as well as the normal batting, bowling and fielding. The aspiration is to make umpiring and scoring something that everyone does not the current perception that it is something someone else does.

The new Surrey Junior Cricket Championship (SJCC) also includes a focus on the development of officials. One of the mechanisms that is being employed is graduated laws, that is subsets of the laws for different levels of junior cricket. The full details are due to be announced soon, but in summary it is three levels: a simple subset of the laws for softball and entry level cricket, most of the laws for midlevel junior cricket and nearly the full laws (those appropriate for single innings over limit matches) for the top end of junior cricket. One of the aims is that players and officials do not need to learn the full set of laws to start with, they are unveiled in phases as the age and skill level of the child increase. A further simplification is that the laws and playing conditions are being combined into one document. We hope that this will provide a training and development pathway leading to the current three stage training programme.

If you fancy some online training, let me know and we will see what we can do.

Please keep yourselves safe and positive, things will return to normal eventually. In the meantime please contact us if we can help.

Dave



Club Umpire to National Panel **The Journey**

After being a pretty average player for many years, not wanting to leave the game I love when I stopped playing, I decided to give umpiring a try, and so began my journey.

I umpired a couple of seasons for my Village club, Stokenchurch 2nd XI before deciding to take the level 1 course in 2011. After gaining level 1, I joined the Surrey Championship as a non-panel umpire for a season where I umpired mainly 2nd XI Premier Division matches. I was accepted onto the panel proper joining list 2 in 2012 which was mainly



Division 2 and 3 matches. I was then promoted to List 1 in 2013 which was mainly division 1 games and to the Premier Reserve list in 2014 which was a mix of Premier division matches and list 1 matches where I spent 2 seasons. I was promoted to the Premier list in 2016.

When I first started umpiring seriously, I had had an ambition to umpire Minor Counties and County second XI cricket and I can be very determined when I have a goal, but the amount of commitment, time, dedication, admin and hard work that has gone into achieving this is not to be taken lightly. A saying that I kept hearing was "you need to put the hard yards in".

At first, I was umpiring as many games as I could get no matter what standard or age group, as these games were priceless for learning the art of umpiring. They were ideal for practicing different techniques and also great fun, not to mention the invaluable tips and advice I picked up along the way from experienced colleagues

Something else that needs stressing is that the help and support of Surrey ACO since I started umpiring has been priceless. The training I received was both first class and a very enjoyable experience. I have made some good friends on this journey, people who have genuinely taken an

interest in me, offered advice and been at the end of a phone when I have needed pep talks. Make no mistake you can't do this without help, support and advice of these people who have been there and done it, and of which we are blessed with plenty in Surrey.

Not to be underestimated also is the help and encouragement given by the Surrey Championship Panel, the County Appointments Officer and Performance Officer, along with other County Officials all of whom have shown great faith, belief and confidence in me in giving me the appointments they have throughout my time so far.

I was unsuccessful last year in my attempt to make the National Panel as it is now called, the "D"list and Minor Counties (to be called the National Counties from 2020) lists have been merged as of last season, and although not a surprise to be unsuccessful at the first attempt it was none the less disappointing, especially with all the work that went into it.

Not to be deterred after getting over the initial disappointment and dealing with the sudden death of a very close friend, with help and encouragement I regained focus and was more determined than ever to achieve my goal the next time.

The 2019 season it's fair to say was something I couldn't even have dreamt of when I took my first steps into Umpiring and certainly one, I will never forget.

Along with my Surrey Championship appointments, I was fortunate to be given a host of other top games, and was also invited by the ECB to Loughborough for 3 days in August for the ECB Super 4's which is where the best U17's from around the country are split into regions and are at their final trial stage for England U19's. This was another huge learning experience as I was with three Umpires from various parts of the Country whom I'd never met before. It was interesting to see how their styles differed from what I'm used to in Surrey and how we learned to work together.



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I had another chance to stand with Umpires from different parts of the Country was when I received the biggest appointment I have had when chosen to Umpire the National Club T20 finals day at Derbyshire CCC, when my Colleagues came from Liverpool and Cheshire. We also had two observers from Northamptonshire.

I was appointed to the second semi – final and the final which due to inclement weather earlier in the day finished at just gone 10pm. This was a thoroughly enjoyable experience and my proudest moment as an Umpire once I got the nerves under control.

The season 2019 was made complete when I was informed in early January 2020 that I had been promoted to the National Panel.

I also would like to congratulate John Flatley on achieving his promotion as well which is thoroughly deserved. We have always supported and encouraged each other throughout and have gone through the same highs and lows but are both very proud to have achieved this and to be joining Matt and Jeremy as Surrey representatives on the National Panel.

There are too many people to list personally who have helped me along the way, but I sincerely thank each and every one for their help, support and belief in me.

If I can offer advice to anyone who has ambitions of progressing their Umpiring, it is without doubt never to be frightened to ask for help and advice of more experienced colleagues and listen to observers when they watch you as they are there to help.

Be confident in your ability and most important of all enjoy yourself as we wouldn't be out there if we didn't enjoy what we do. We have, without doubt, the best seat in the house.

I am still learning now, and you will never stop the learning process whatever level you umpire at. There will be highs and lows throughout, but I have learnt more from the lows so don't get disappointed when things aren't going as well as you would like.

The journey has, at times, been difficult frustrating but also enjoyable, rewarding and fun with some great laughs on the way.

As the next chapter begins there are more “hard yards” to be put in!

Paul Witney

DBS Process Changes

During this period of lockdown DBS will expire and need to be renewed but we are using a revised process in keeping with social distancing. The Deputy County Welfare Officer Nigel Legg (nalegg64@gmail.com) will undertake Id verification for SACO members

Surrey Junior Cricket Championship

After 18 months of planning it is all change in Junior Cricket within Surrey. The various regional leagues have worked together with the Surrey



Cricket Foundation and the new structure has been created to provide consistent formats, agility, economies of scale, long term sustainability and central support in

delivering one of the largest junior league operations in the country.

The Championship replaces the five regional league structures that have been operating independently for many years across the county.

What does this mean for Umpires? If you stand in junior matches in 2020, although the teams and the venues may be the same, the playing conditions are likely to have changed. Please look out for further information as we move towards the start of the new season.

Further details can be found at:

<https://surreyjuniorchampionship.play-cricket.com/>



Whiling away time during lockdown

There are a couple of interesting cricket documentaries showing on Amazon Prime. If you haven't got an Amazon Prime account you might want to consider taking out the current 30-day free trial to take advantage of the lockdown to watch these films, remembering to cancel your membership before it kicks in at the end of the trial.



The first is the Edge which charts the rise and fall of the England cricket team under coach Andy Flower and captain Andrew Strauss. The narration is provided by Toby Jones, the superb actor, and provides great insights into the militaristic discipline instilled by Flower and the subsequent psychological burnout of a number of the players.

The second, The Test, is an eight-part fly-on-the wall documentary about the reinvention of the Australian cricket team.



It follows the team in the 18 months from the Cape Town ball-tampering scandal up to the retention of the Ashes at the end of the 2019 English cricket season. While some cynics see it as little more than a massive PR exercise, the series provides fascinating insights behind the scenes.

For the more nostalgic amongst you, courtesy of the British Council, Lord's TV has made a short documentary film of the 1948 Test match at Lord's between England and Australia during that Ashes series on [YouTube](#). There is some classic footage accompanied by the warm burr of John Arlott – fabulous stuff.



County Appointments Officer update

Many thanks to all members who responded to my appeals for umpires to stand in Surrey CCC Performance Department, County Age-Group and schools' fixtures.

All games due to take place before 7th May are now cancelled or postponed. The first-round fixtures of the ECB Royal London Club Championship on 10th May have also been postponed. I have put on hold appointments for fixtures after that date until we have greater clarity if, or when, the 2020 cricket season will start.

John Flatley