

Surrey Association of Cricket Officials (SACO)
County Appointments Officer Report for 2024

1. The 2024 season was my eighth as your SACO County Appointments Officer (CAO). **I was grateful, for the second season, to have the assistance of Graeme Hall and Richard Wood in managing appointments for the Surrey CCC Performance Department** (i.e. internal age-group games) and **schools**.
2. Our mantra is to “**appoint the right umpires for the right games**”. In practice this means looking for opportunities to pair newer umpires with experienced ones to support the former in their early days. It also means ensuring we comply with guidance issued centrally, by ECB ACO, on minimum umpire grading for national ECB competitions. My role includes working closely with the County Development Officer to provide more challenging opportunities for those umpires with a realistic prospect of future advancement to the M2 grade (which covers National Panel umpires). Such umpires are prioritised for later rounds of ECB national competitions and multi-day cricket.
3. **Regular circulars were sent out (18 across the season) to all SACO umpires during the season** to advertise clubs and schools that had approached me for help sourcing umpires. These circulars were supplemented by call outs via WTU memos in response to short-term ad hoc requests. **I know that SACO were responsible for at least 555 umpire appointments** (each umpire counting as one appointment) as detailed below. In addition to these, there were several ad hoc appointments or referrals to clubs seeking umpires through the SACO bureau service (which I don’t keep a record of) so the **final number is probably closer to 600 umpire appointments across the whole season**.
4. **Before the season started SACO was asked to make regular appointments for four schools: three continued from the previous season (Hampton, St. John’s Leatherhead and RGS Guildford) and we lost one (KCS Wimbledon) but gained another St. George’s College (Weybridge)**. During the season we were also made several ad hoc appointments for Alleyn’s and Dunnotar. **Across the whole season we made 88 umpire appointments to such matches (slightly down from the 93 the previous season but up from 67 in 2022)**. In addition, to these regular appointments we were asked to appoint 30 umpires (6 per day) to stand in the Royal Grammar School annual festival that was this year hosted by RGS Guildford. With a couple of exceptions, all schools settled their invoices promptly allowing me to reimburse most umpires at the end of the season.
5. **University fixtures continued to be the most problematic to organise**. Very late requests for umpires for matches (sometimes the day before the game), expecting umpires to stand at both ends, double-booked pitches and late (or non) payment of fees continuing to be problems. Added to this was a change in invoicing arrangements introduced by two Universities; one of which led to ongoing delays in resolving payments. At the heart of this is a concern about the tax status of umpire payments and the commissioning body requiring umpires to make declarations about their employment status. This hasn’t yet become an issue with schools, but it is likely that to ensure that Surrey ACO or the County ACO is not at risk of being seen as an

employing agent that umpires will be required to self-invoice in future. **Across the season, we made 37 umpire appointments to university fixtures (compares with 34 in 2023 and 33 in 2022).**

6. We continued to take responsibility for the appointment of umpires requested by the **British Gorkhali Cricket League (BGCL)** supported by the Hampshire ACO on several weeks as we were unable to cover all appointments. This is a Sunday afternoon competition with fixtures held at grounds around the Hampshire/Surrey borders. **We made 28 appointments to these fixtures including appointing both umpires to stand in the Final game at Aldershot CC and one umpire in a BGCL fixture versus the MCC.** All those umpires involved in these fixtures again commented on how enjoyable these games were to umpire. The BGCL also settled their payments promptly which was also welcome.
7. The Surrey CCC reverted to asking SACO to provide 2 umpires for most of their programme of Performance Department cricket for both internal squad and County Age Group (CAG) friendlies. **We made 197 such appointments in the 2024 season.** The advantage of having Graeme involved in these appointments is that he could steer appointments to new members and those requiring observations for ACO accreditation purposes. Match fees in 2024 remained the same as in 2023 and for Surrey Academy and CAG Under 18s were set at £66, £53 for Boys CAG Under 13s to 15s and £50 for all other age-groups. All these payments were claimed from Surrey CCC by the appointed umpires and, as far as I am aware, were settled promptly.
8. **As County Appointments Officer, I was asked to nominate or appoint umpires for several ECB competitions.** This totalled 135 appointments covering the following competitions:
 - National Club Championship - 44 appointments
 - Boys CAG matches (Under 18s, Under 16s and Under 14s) – 38 appointments
 - Regional Women's Academy matches - 9 appointments
 - County Women's games - 13 appointments
 - County Girls Age-Group matches (Under 18s and Under 15s) – 23 appointments
 - Boys and Girls Club competitions – 8 appointments
9. The ECB raised their match fees for games that CAOs appoint to from £30 to £40 (mileage will remain at 40p per mile) in 2023 and the same rate applied in 2024 (and will do in 2025).
10. **We continued to support the Surrey Cricket Foundation in appointing around 40 umpires to several of their significant matches** including Girls Club Finals days, the Surrey Junior Cricket Championship Finals matches and Walking Cricket Finals. Also included was a round robin tournament at **the Oval** on 18 June to celebrate National Refugee Week **to which Andrew Carnegie and Asad Lone were appointed.**
11. Appointments were also made to national ECB competitions and several nominations of Surrey ACO members for Regional/National appointments were successful. This included **Madhur Hemnani being appointed to the ECB Super Fours (England Under 19s trial matches) at Loughborough and Vijay Dwarakanath to the National Club Under 15s and Under 13s Finals at Lord's.**

12. **Finally, as ever I would like to thank all those SACO members who made themselves available for the wide range of games that we are asked to appoint umpires.** The feedback from those seeking the services of SACO to appoint umpires to stand in their games was again very positive with no significant issues raised with me this season.

John Flatley
Surrey ACO
County Appointments Officer
8th February 2025