

HGWHUA UMPIRE COACHING AND GRADING POLICY

Coaching and grading are 2 separate things and I will deal with each of these separately:

1. COACHING:

The aim of umpire coaching is to improve your umpiring! An umpire coach will watch your game (or occasionally umpire the other end of the match with you). They will appraise your strengths and weaknesses and will formulate some points of advice for you. After the match, they will give you a “de-brief” about the match and will discuss with you what needs to be done to improve your performance. They will (probably) also give you written feedback later on.

It is up to you to choose what to implement of each coach’s advice, and you will sometimes find different advice from different coaches (after all, we each have our own model of how we handle a match). Please try to accept what is said in a positive frame of mind, and at least try the ideas out.

We will, on occasions, coach umpires who are not on our panel (for example, new umpires who have done their Level 1 course but not yet gone onto the panel) at the request of a club to allow them to improve. This is generally done out of season.

2. ASSESSMENT WATCHINGS:

For most of you, Assessment will be done at the same time as coaching. There are three main ideas behind grading all our panel umpires:

- (i) To allow us to appoint you to the correct level of matches – this is essential both for your own comfort, for safety and to benefit the players.
- (ii) To allow you to appreciate where you stand, and what level of matches you can cope with.
- (iii) To allow the Selection Committee to recommend upwardly mobile umpires for movement up to the West panel.

We have 3 grades:

- Grade A – able to umpire any league match that we appoint to
- Grade B – umpire mainly on DCM 1 and Central 1 matches. Might be appointed to North Conference matches with an experienced colleague.
- Grade C – umpire mainly on Central 2 and DCM 2 matches. Might be appointed to Central 1 matches with an experienced colleague.

The Gradings are done roughly twice a season when our Selection Committee meets. We use the reports that have come in from Assessments during the season. If you have not had any Assessment watchings, we will not change your grade.

We will not change your grade based on a single Assessment report (either good or bad) – we need to see at least 2 Assessment reports giving the same message. At the bottom of the form, you will see 2 sets of grades:

- Performance Today: Above Match / To Match / Below Match
- Future Potential: Upward / Level / Sliding

These act as a summary of the detailed comments above, and allow us to see whether we need to start to consider a change of grade. However, a single report rating you as “Above Match and Upward” or “Below Match and Sliding” will not result in a change of grade – we need to see progress on at least a couple of reports, including at least one on a higher match than you are used to (if the movement is potentially upward) and that involves significant challenge to you as an umpire. Sometimes, we are all unlucky in that a match that we come to assess you on is routine, gentle, and gives you no chance to show how good you are! If a match report indicates that you might be on the wrong grade, then we will try (if suitable watchers are available) to get you watched again and possibly given a more challenging match or two as soon as is practical. Bear in mind that appointments are done in blocks, so it might not be possible immediately.

After an Assessment Watching, you will always be de-briefed, and will have a chance to discuss what your watcher is going to put into their report. Please be prepared for an honest exchange of views – news can be good or bad, but must be expressed honestly and openly for both sides to benefit from the exercise. You will also receive a formal Umpire Performance Report, copies of which will be circulated to the Selection Committee. If you feel that anything on the report is unfair, please contact your assessor.

If a member is on our A panel and is doing really well, then the Selection Committee might well decide to recommend them for an assessment to see if they can move up to the West umpiring panel. This is obviously done with the full knowledge of the umpire involved, and, if our recommendation is accepted, we will try to give you tough, challenging matches in the run up to your assessment for the West. Before making such a recommendation, we have to be sure that you can handle the pace, and especially challenge that West Championship matches can hold – it is essential that you have demonstrated that you can control things if they get hot!

We do not publish your grades on the web-site. They are private information between yourselves and the Association. Indeed, we never discuss individual umpires’ performances at Committee – this is done exclusively at the Selection Committee. If you want to know your current grade, you can contact the Chief Coach (e-mail is best), and you can always discuss gradings with him or with our Chairman (who is on the Selection Committee).

In reading the above, please remember that, in an ideal world, we would have enough coaches and assessors to watch you several times per season. In reality, things are quite different, and it can be hard to get to you as often as we wish.

Peter Wheatley