

Training Officer's Report 2017

2017 review

This year was the last year of running courses in the current format. Significant changes are coming as we move forward (as outlined below).

The Association supported the provision of an ECB ACO Level 1 Umpires course held at Reigate Grammar School in late January/early February 2017. This was well attended with 20 candidates enrolled and we experimented running it over 3 shorter days, rather than 2 longer ones. This seemed to work better with less information to be crammed in each day, more time for reflection by candidates and it allowed the use of homework to consolidate learning.

Disappointingly, there was insufficient interest to enable us to run an ECB ACO Level 1a course this year. Similarly, there was insufficient interest for us to run an ECB ACO Level 1 Scorers course.

On a more positive note, our tutors supported a number of Introductory evenings for both scorers and umpires across the county; these being organized centrally by Surrey Association of Cricket Officials (SACO). Over 250 people attended these events across Surrey and give us hope that some may be interested enough to return to the new Stage 1 courses being run during the close season.

With regard to scorers, it was noticeable that there was increasing demand for the teaching of computer scoring and much less interest in traditional book scoring. This may explain the lack of interest in the Level 1 course which continues to be predominantly book-based.

Law changes – 1st October 2017

Significant changes to the Laws came into effect on 1st October 2017. The SACO will be running a series of sessions across the County in the New Year which will be open to all; ACO members and non-members, captains, players, club officials and anyone with an interest in the game.

These are expected to be evening sessions at venues with a large seating capacity to ensure anyone interested can find a suitable venue. A fee of £5 is likely to be charged to encourage those who sign-up to turn-up.

As is becoming increasingly the case, these sessions will be centrally administered via a new national event booking system being provided by ECB ACO to all counties. This is an online system (called Cvent) which allows people to book a place at a venue of their choice and with all the normal administrative burden taken away from the Training Officers. No more we will need to deal with individual booking forms, cheques and attendance registers etc. This will all be done online without the need for (much) human intervention. Personally, I welcome this development as it will mean I will be able to devote much more of my volunteering time to more useful activities. There will be prominent links to it on the national ECB ACO and SACO websites and the Surrey Cricket Foundation will be promoting the sessions via their marketing department.

While SACO will deliver the training in the new Laws, the course material will be supplied by MCC. To coincide with the Law changes, MCC have developed a new online resource which can be used by anyone as a reference tool. It is very professionally done and I would encourage members to have a look at it: <https://laws.lords.org/theme/dynamic/login.php>

The Law changes have also been reflected in the very good animations (voiced over by Stephen Fry) that are also available online: <https://www.lords.org/mcc/laws-of-cricket/laws-of-cricket-animations/>.

ECB ACO course changes

As mentioned in last year's report, there have been changes to the format and content of ECB ACO. The basic course, for umpires, is now called Stage 1 and while covering the Laws has a stronger focus on how to apply them. The expectation being that candidates will supplement their classroom learning with the online resources mentioned above. The course will be delivered in 1 day or 3 evenings.

Candidates may move onto Stage 2 (which again is a 1 day or 3 evening session course) immediately after completing Stage 1. It is likely that SACO will run them over consecutive weekends/evenings starting in January/February 2018. Like the Law change events, these courses will be centrally organized across the County making full use of the new online booking system.

Surrey tutors have seen the content of these new courses and dates are being arranged. The current thinking is that the courses will be run out of 3 centres in the County; one in the West, one in the Centre and one in the East. Each centre is expected to have a number of courses available to meet demand.

A very helpful overview of the new course structure (including Stages 3 and 4 which are still being developed) can be found on the SACO website:

http://www.surreycriketofficials.org.uk/?page_id=149

There are also changes to the [scorers' pathway](#) with the Level 1 being called "Scoring the game" and Level 2 "Planning and preparation". There will be 3 continuous professional development (CPD) modules for linear scoring, electronic scoring and Duckworth Lewis Stern calculations. These are available to anyone from Level 1 onwards and all carry ECB ACO certificates of attendance. Again more details can be found on the SACO website:

http://www.surreycriketofficials.org.uk/?page_id=152

Alongside the above changes is a new mantra "Education for all, progress for some". In order to meet ECB's mission to increase the number of officials the idea is that we should not do anything that prevents people from learning. Thus, anyone whether an ACO member or not may register for any course at any level. The only condition being that they have a certificate of attendance for the prior stage.

Those who wish to progress up the officials' pathway will be required to be accredited at each stage but this will be determined not simply by passing a test but by actual performance. The details of this are yet to be confirmed but it seems clear that the mission is to expand both the quantity and quality of officials.

To encourage more people into umpiring, ECB ACO are levying a flat-rate national fee of £30 for Stage 1 course and those wishing to go straight onto Stage 2 can do so at a discounted rate of £10. All fees will be collected at the time of booking via the online system meaning there will be no transfer of funds between County ACOs and the national body.

The cost of running the course (e.g. hiring venue and paying tutor expenses) will be managed locally and is anticipated to be covered by a training grant given to SACO by the Surrey Cricket Foundation.

All of the above changes means that training of officials will be more efficiently administered centrally. SACO are committed to continuing to run courses across the whole county. It is hoped that the new arrangements may allow us to deliver more training to more people than we have been able to hitherto.

Thanks to tutor team

As always, the feedback from students on all of our courses is overwhelmingly positive. A large part of that is due to the energy and enthusiasm of our volunteer tutor team and I would like to place on record my thanks to all of those involved: Jeremy Beckwith, John Moulton, John Smith, Sue Robinson and Digby Hunt.

Both John Moulton and John Smith have decided that the time is right for them to step aside from their tutoring roles. Both have played a key role over a number of years training both umpires and scorers. As both a student and fellow tutor, I have personally learnt a lot from them and found them a pleasure to be around.

John Flatley
ESCUSA Training Officer
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