

OFFICIATING MATTERS

#YESITDOES

MARCH 2025 EDITION

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Hi everyone.

Does this week's weather signal an end to the damp and dreary stuff of the last few months and provide a good omen for the summer ahead? Hopefully, our hardworking ground staff around the county can now see a little bit of light at the end of the pre-season tunnel.

Enjoy this latest, well-presented and very full edition of Officiating Matters and a big thank you to all those who attended last week's AGM at Alveston. I feel it was a very productive meeting at which there was a healthy attendance of both scorers and umpires, so a very positive evening to end the old year and begin the new.

Thanks, too, to Les Clemenson for attending and providing us with some insightful information and to Harry Watts, whose input reaffirmed the burgeoning relationship between GACO and the GCF.

A couple of important reminders:

1) DBS - there is a technical issue at the ECB end which is being addressed, but it is very important that when you receive your 'volunteer' reminders, you complete both the GOV.UK and ECB email sections.

2) WTU availability - Steve, Les, Barry and the remainder of the appointments team are a little behind due to the DBS issues, but to assist them, please ensure your availability is up together as far as possible.

Finally, Matt Jackson, who is organising the GACO end-of-season event will be pursuing our membership for ideas of what format you would like and also to co-opt a few volunteers to assist with the organisation of the gathering.

Fingers crossed for the improved weather to continue and I look forward to seeing you all very soon, either on or off the field.

Phil



GACO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This was held last Thursday at The Ship Inn at Alveston and was attended by over 40 GACO members. The meeting's minutes will be forwarded in due course, but certain subjects that arose are included elsewhere in this edition of Officiating Matters.

NEW WEBSITE

The creation of a new website is being discussed with GCF, but for the time being, **www.gaco.org.uk** remains our main online forum.

In the only committee change for 2025/26, Andrew Davis will take over from Rishi Maktedar as secretary, with Rishi becoming the new Webmaster. Rishi will be working with the GCF to build, maintain and upgrade the new website, while Craig Blakeway will continue in his current role of Publicity/Media Officer.

SCORING MATTERS #YesItDoes with SUE DRINKWATER



“Scorer Training: A two-day Club Scorer course took place in February 2025 at the County Ground in Bristol, with 8 new scorers and one returning for a refresher before the 2025 season in attendance.

No other scoring courses are currently scheduled as we await the launch of the new scorer pathway, other than some PCS app courses for clubs who have requested them. If there is anything you would like organised for

scorers, then please let me know on gacoscorers@gmail.com and if there is enough interest, then something will be arranged. Meantime, why not try this quiz and see if you can find all the scoring phrases hidden in it (answers on Page 25):

- a. 6 B in an O
- b. 11 P P S
- c. 2 U P M
- d. 10 D in an I
- e. 50 R in a H C
- f. L 3 T S
- g. 0 R in a M (C to the B)
- h. 1 P R for a N B
- i. 0 R S when a C is T
- j. 0 R S if L B are D
- k. 5 P R for B H H
- l. 0 R S if a S with a R is R O T
- m. 5 R C to the B when the S H a N B for 4
- n. 4 R C to the B when the S H a N B for 4
- o. 1 R C to N B E when the S H a N B for 4
- p. 1 R S if the B R 2 and the U S S R
- q. 5 R C to the B if the U S W then B 4
- r. 1 R S if the B R 2 but 1 R is N T W
- s. L B 150 R in a 4 D M to E T F-O
- t. 20 O in the L H

UMPIRE DEVELOPMENT

There will be three levels of Boundary Edge Development Observations this season:

1. Purely development BEDOs, primarily for umpires in their first and second seasons, but to include as many other officials as possible.
2. ECB assessments for those people that are looking to advance their grading from M5 to M4 or M4 to M3 (or the female equivalents).
3. Observations for all P1 umpires as a quality control measure from top down.

1. Development Observations

We are looking for additional observers to join our BEDO team and help with Development observations for the upcoming season, whether it be retired / semi-retired officials who would like to visit some new grounds over the course of the summer or active umpires who can give up one officiating Saturday to support less experienced colleagues.

There will be a pre-season Zoom meeting for all 2025 BEDOs / interested parties on Thursday 24th April (7pm).

If you are interested in playing an active and very important role in umpire support & development during the upcoming season, please email development@gaco.org.uk to register your interest or glean further information.

2. ECB Advancement Observations

People interested in seeking to advance their gradings / move to the next tier of officiating, will need to complete the ECB form and return it to development@gaco.org.uk before the end of April. This effectively guarantees you the minimum number of formal observations required to support your application for advancement (1 for M5 to M4 and 2 for M4 to M3). The forms should be available around the end of this month (and certainly before Easter); people will be notified of this via WTU.

While the above have been in operation for several years, the WEPL Premier Panel Development programme (below) is a completely new initiative this season.

3. WEPL Premier Panel Umpire Development – 2025

Following discussions with WEPL, a number of things have been put in place for the 2025 season.

1. A pod system will be trialled in P1 that will enable umpires to stand with a smaller number of colleagues a little more often during the season. This should have a 2-fold benefit in that (a) the clubs will see a “pair” of umpires together more often than previously as well as allowing colleagues to build a closer working relationship that will hopefully lead to improved outcomes.
2. Higher levels of expenses which we hope will encourage more people to want to enter the umpiring community as well as hopefully focussing current umpires to improve their skills and knowledge.

3. To enable umpires to be promoted to Premier 1 (and other panels), the new umpires have to fulfil certain criteria that show they are both confident and capable of officiating at this level. The same is the case at all levels within the ECB up to and including both National Panel and First-Class cricket.

In all this, however, there is currently no requirement or expectation that umpires already on panels need to show they still meet the criteria and have the competencies required at these levels. This, we believe, must change. It happens at FC level, but not currently at Premier League level.

To enable us to develop these improvements across Recreational Cricket, we intend to begin this process in 2025 by observing umpires in Premier 1 cricket. Hopefully, if successful, we can extend this to other panels within the WEPL structure.

Umpires wishing to apply for promotion to the Premier1 Panel have to show competencies against expected standards across a number of key areas. These are the same across all levels of ECB cricket in the UK and mirror the areas in which the captains are asked to grade an umpire's performance on a match-by-match basis.

There are:

Preparation/Planning and Technical skills

Decision Making

Match Management

Communication and Teamwork

People management

Presence and Image

It is the intention that for 2025, all umpires will be observed at least once during the season and given guidance and feedback to help develop standards. Initially, Les Clemenson and Bob Hampshire will be fulfilling these visits and, if possible, they will cover two matches each on a Saturday, so four umpires in total. Should they see anything that they think might need attention, there may be a follow-up observation later in the season.

The visibility of "coach/observers" at NP and FC cricket matches has had a positive impact on the clubs and players, as they see that a real effort is being made to help and improve umpiring standards. It is hoped that this can be achieved in WEPL, too.

Additionally, it is expected that P1 umpires will take the online MCC intermediate Laws test.

Finally, there's an expectation that all WEPL umpires will attend a minimum of two "CPD" style meetings (F2F/online) during the season, one of which will be the pre-season seminar.

Further information regarding this initiative will follow via WTU.

ECB UMPIRES' DEVELOPMENT COURSE

This course is for people that have completed the ECB Umpires' Course in the last two years who are considering umpiring in league / competition cricket. It is also suitable for qualified umpires who have had a break from the game and are considering returning to the middle.

Date: Sunday 23rd March.

Venue: Hatherley & Reddings CC, North Park, Shurdington, Cheltenham, GL51-4XA.

Times: 9.30am-5.00pm.

Cost: £25.

Book: <https://booking.ecb.co.uk/Q0eZV1>

ARE YOU READY TO CALL PLAY?

These days are aimed at new umpires & scorers – umpires who have completed both the ECB Umpires' Course and Umpires Development course (above) and are looking to umpire / score in league / competition cricket this summer and scorers who have completed the Club Scorer or Introductory Scoring Course in the last two years. As above, it is also suitable for qualified umpires / scorers who have had a break from the game and are aiming to return this season or 1st/2nd-year officials who would like a pre-season refresher.

Umpiring attendees will complete pre-match duties and spend time umpiring a pre-season game with on-field and boundary-edge coaching & mentoring support, while scoring attendees will score the match in a group with mentoring and support from experienced scorers.

Please note that scorers will need to identify which method of scoring they want to practice (paper scoresheet, PCS app or PCS Pro on a laptop) and bring their own scoring device/materials.

Officials need only attend one of the days below:

Sunday 20th April: Hatherley & Reddings v Cheltenham Civil Service. 40 overs; 1.00pm start. Meet at the ground at 11.30am.

Sunday 27th April: Chipping Sodbury CC v Carsons & Mangotsfield. 40 overs; 1.00pm start. Meet at the ground at 11.30am.

Umpires, please contact Bob Owen (development@gaco.org.uk) and scorers, Sue Drinkwater (scorers@gaco.org.uk) to register your interest.

GACO CRICKET CALENDAR

Sunday 9 th March	ECB Intro Umpire Course	Bedminster Down
Sunday 16 th March	WEPL Umpires' Meeting	BAWA Club, Bristol
	ECB Intro Umpire Course	Hartpury University
Sunday 23 rd March	ECB Panel Umpire Course	Hatherley & Reddings CC
Sunday 20 th April	Are You Ready to Call Play? (New umpires' practical day)	Hatherley & Reddings CC
Tuesday 22 nd April	GACO Pre-Season Seminar	The Ship, Alveston
Thursday 24 th April	Boundary Edge Developers' Meeting	Zoom
Sunday 27 th April	Are You Ready to Call Play? (New umpires' practical day)	Chipping Sodbury CC
Saturday 3 rd May	League season starts	Various
<i>More dates will be added when they become known.</i>		

Other Umpire Courses

Monday 7 th April	Get Into Cricket (14-18 years)	
Wednesday 9 th April	Club Intro Course	Langford CC
Wednesday 23 rd April	Get Into Cricket (14-18 years)	
Monday 28 th April	Club Intro Course	Corse & Staunton CC
Wednesday 30 th April	Get Into Cricket (14-18 years)	
Wednesday 7 th May	Get Into Cricket (14-18 years)	
Monday 12 th May	Get Into Cricket (14-18 years)	
<i>'Get Into Cricket' is a very successful initiative which is run by the GCF for 14 to 18-year-olds. There are 8 modules in the qualification, including coaching, safeguarding, scoring & umpiring and GACO supports GCF by running the latter two sections.</i>		
<i>Club Intro courses are organised by individual clubs in order to upskill their members – usually for youth coaches or players who are likely to do the '10-over' stretch. More club courses will be added if and when clubs apply.</i>		

GACO PRE-SEASON SEMINAR

This will be held at The Ship Inn, Thornbury Road, Alveston, BS35-3LL on Tuesday 22nd April; 7.00 for 7.30pm start.



DBS ANNUAL UPDATES & RENEWALS - IMPORTANT

If, as an active official, you have a current DBS that is accepted by ECB, you need to be aware that the requirements of the DBS update service system have changed.

For the annual check and renewal to be carried out, it is now **MANDATORY** for you to respond to **BOTH** the e-mails that you receive advising you that your annual update check is due.

The two messages will be sent to you a month before the re-check is scheduled and will be from:

- donotreply@db.gov.uk with Subject heading: “FYI: Action required to renew your Update Service subscription”
- ECB Safeguarding Team <db.gov.uk> with Subject heading: “ECB DBS Expiry - Important Message - Action required”

Each message will remind you of the ID reference (*for the DBS system*) and Username (*for the ECBdisclosures system*) that you will need to use to access the two different sets of records.

The two messages are now much clearer than they were before:

- they clearly state that the checks are only valid for 12 months
- both clearly state that action is required
- both tell you that unless you renew the update service ‘subscription’ your DBS check validity will expire and if this happens a new DBS application will be required
- the ECB message confirms that their service is free of charge

If you respond first to the ECB reminder, i.e. the db.gov.uk message, once you have answered their questions there is a link button that goes straight to the DBS site log-in page. You will then need your ID reference from the donotreply@db.gov.uk message to get to your record to be able to update it.

This is most likely the easiest way to make sure both steps of the process are completed.

If you respond first to the donotreply@db.gov.uk message, even when you have completed their requirements you will need to log-in separately to the ECB system to complete that questionnaire.

In each case the requirement is for you to confirm your current circumstances.

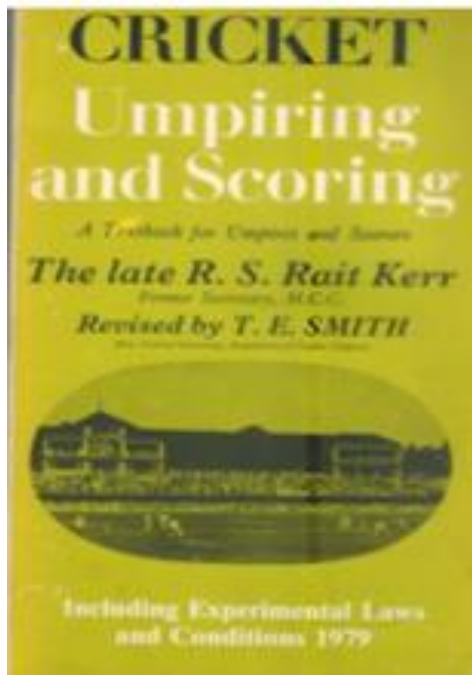
The difference this time around is that the donotreply@db.gov.uk message now requires a definite response whereas previously it only required action if your circumstances had changed.

To maintain a valid DBS clearance that is accepted by ECB, it is essential that both sets of records are updated. If not, the validity of current checks will lapse and a new DBS application will be required.

WORDS FROM THE PAST THAT ECHO TODAY

Les Clemenson shares some intimate details of a literary relic.

Our local library recently held a sale of old books and my wife found the publication below. Not an ex-library book as it turned out, but one donated to them for their sale.



I am confident many of you will have a copy of this gathering dust somewhere. It is, of course, the pre-cursor to Tom Smith's. This is the 1979 reprint of the 1968 revision, first published in 1969. But the history of the book goes back to its first edition in 1957. It measures 7" x 4.25" and comprises 94 pages of detailed discussion on the then Laws, and a basic introduction to book/box scoring.

I was surprised to see there were 47 Laws then, but soon realised I couldn't (and still can't) recall how many there were when I did my ACU written exam all those years ago.

More interesting are some remarks in the book - messages that are as applicable today as they were 50+ years ago.

Firstly, by my favourite commentator and cricket journalist, the great John Arlott, in his Foreword to the 1957 edition.

"Umpiring can make or ruin a game of cricket. If it makes it, your average cricketer takes the fact for granted. If it ruins it, he grumbles, forgetting that, for far too long, cricketers have paid little real attention to the umpiring of their matches."

He goes on to add:

"The Association of Cricket Umpires has not attempted to demand anything for umpires. It has merely set out to raise the standard of every last one of its members to such a height that they are all rightful and valuable participants in the general cricketing scene."

Next, the original author, R.S. Rait Kerr, writes, in his preface: "It is hoped that this text book will be useful for its purpose and will assist towards an improvement in the general standard of umpiring."

Far-sighted words given, 70 years later, all of us use the current version of this text book as our bible and key learning tool.

And finally, whilst lamenting the [then] state of umpiring and explaining why the ACU was formed “...the general recognition of the fact that at this time umpiring in every grade of cricket fell short of the ideal.”

The book goes on to discuss the recruitment of umpires. It argues retiring players and younger people who perhaps lack the ability or opportunities to play at more senior levels, should be ideal candidates and remarks: “The adequate supply of suitable material (*ie candidates to become umpires*) is so essential to the well-being of club cricket and to the enjoyment of the game by the players, that umpire associations and clubs should join forces to organise this important aspect of the game.”

Although it is hard to disagree with this, it seems to me that 50 or 70 years after the words were first written (I cannot tell which revision they come from), we are still waiting for this to become the norm.

SPRING QUIZ

Around the WEPL grounds. Who plays here:

1. The Clanage
2. Red Lion Field
3. The Convent Field
4. The Frank Taylor Memorial Ground
5. Gerard Buxton Sports Ground
6. Station Road
7. North Park
8. The Rose Green Centre
9. Gander Lane
10. The Boundary Field
11. The Grove
12. The Wyvern Club
13. Sleepy Hollow
14. Broadley's
15. Broadham Fields
16. Penpole Lane
17. Pounds Close
18. Combe Park
19. Sustain Cricket Ground
20. Ryeworth Fields.



CRICKETING ODDITIES



An extraordinary third Test in Mumbai in 2011 saw India and West Indies draw the match with the scores level, only the second such instance that this has happened in the 2,000+ Test matches that have been played. The first came in Bulawayo in 1996-97, when England were so exasperated by Zimbabwe's negative tactics that after the match their coach, David Lloyd, famously fumed: "We flippin' murdered 'em!"

This time, it was not quite so easy to claim a moral victory: although India were the likelier winners, all four results were still possible with two balls remaining. With two overs to go however, India had looked to have the game sewn up. They needed only six runs to reach their target of 243, with three wickets in hand and the first-innings centurion Ravichandran Ashwin at the crease. However, the West Indies pacemen, Ravi Rampaul and Fidel Edwards, limited the home side to just five runs to help earn their side a draw and avoid a series whitewash.

During those two tension-filled overs, Rampaul bowled Ishant Sharma for 10 and then, off the final ball of the match, Ashwin was run out for 14 going for a second run that would have won India the game. Instead, they finished on 242 for nine, meaning the scores were level. "At the end I thought I should take the safer option of defending one ball and then attacking the last one, but it didn't quite work out," Ashwin explained afterwards in an understatement that was nearly as wide of the mark as the tactical miscalculation that preceded it.

West Indies 590 & 134; India 482 & 242-9.

INDOOR CRICKET – by Jim Hyland

As is the tradition with Cheltenham indoor cricket, we take a mid-season break to allow for KO Cup matches to be played before returning to finish the league fixtures – details of this along with county play-off matches and the national competition will appear in the next edition.

KO Plate – (Division 3 & 4 league teams).

1st round highlights:

Paul Evans - taking 3 wickets for 4 runs in 9 balls for St Stephens in their win over Oakley Vipers.

Martin McGill – 31 runs from 22 balls for Whitminster. Alas, they still lost to Bayshill.

Quarter-finals:

H & R "B" 135/4 (Harrison Miles 41,* Evan Hale 35) beat Charlton Kings "B" 89/5 (Ben Pearson 35*).

St Stephens 118/4 (Aaron Batchelor 35*, Ollie Lynott-May 29) beat CSSCC "B" 117/4 (Tim Lewis 47*).

Dumbleton 141/4 (Ben Price 35, Dan Lee 25*) beat Quedgeley 62/3.

Birdlip 120/3 (Jacob Bidmead 31*, Aaron Bennett 27) beat Bayshill 101/4 (Steve Pritchard 26, Angus Gutrie 26).

Semi-finals:

These were both one-sided affairs this year - Dumbletons 107/5 proving too much for Birdlip, who were 50/5 in reply.

H & R "B" scored an impressive 134/5 which was also well beyond St Stephens, 68 all out.

Dumbleton have rejoined the competition after several years' absence and are proving very strong for the lower divisions.

In the final they posted a formidable 133/3 (Adam Stuart 31*, Myles Holland 30*, Dan Lee 27*), while in reply, despite a spirited 36* from Ben Higgs, H & R "B" fizzled to 67/5.

KO Cup – (Division 1 & 2 league teams).

The final of this competition was a real nail-biter, decided on the last ball.

Apperley batted first, Alex Tierney (3 overs, 10 runs, 1 x wicket) struck early to remove Andy O'Connor and two quick run outs accounted for George Wathen & David Steinham. Ryan Kilminster then claimed the wicket of Dave Means and Apperley looked in trouble at 30/4. Late order resistance from Gabriel Redding (37 runs from 20 balls) & Jack Bilsby 13 though, allowed a respectable target to be set.

In reply, University of Gloucestershire required 91 to win.

Kilminster 29*, Alex Tierney 14 & Jack Brown 23 all accumulated at slightly above the required rate. 88/4 at the start of the final over looked easy enough. However, tight bowling and excellent fielding set up a fine finish - 2 to win off the final ball which was dispatched for 4 – producing a 2-wicket win for the University.

Thanks to the officials who contributed to a great afternoon of indoor cricket.

Both competitions and all league divisions are sponsored by Gloucester-based:

“DISPLAY REFRIGERATION LIMITED”

Thanks to Mark & Nicky Febrey for their longstanding support.

Andy Todd presenting KO Cup to Ryan Kilminster (University of Gloucestershire)



University team with match officials



Jim Hyland presenting KO shield to Myles Holland (Dumbleton) & Dumbleton CC



Officials Andy Todd, Mike Turner, Sathya Prakash



BEN PEVERALL – A FIRST-CLASS SEASON

Ben, a former WEPL and now first-class umpire, shares some of the experiences of his year in the middle.

2024 was without doubt the most enjoyable, challenging and fulfilling 9 months of cricket I've ever had the pleasure of standing in. And, as I'm sure most of us have over the last few months, I've spent a bit of time reflecting on the season just gone and thinking ahead to 2025...

My season started earlier than most this year, as I headed out to New Zealand to stand in the Auckland Club Premier League competitions. However, it started just like most of our seasons back here in the UK...wet! The league was playing T20s when I joined my colleagues in Auckland on Saturday 6th January, and we were barely out of the first innings powerplay when the heavens opened.

I'd decided to spend 9 weeks out in NZ this winter, to take myself out of my comfort zone, deal with new colleagues, clubs, players and coaches – all in an environment that was totally alien to me. In total I stood in 22 different fixtures during my time out there, covering Premier League Cricket, Schools' Cricket, NZC Community Competitions including Māori cricket, and even making my Women's T20 International debut out there – The Cook Islands vs Fiji in the ICC Pacific Cup! It was especially humbling to stand in the final of the tournament, which was broadcast on NZ TV, where



At the toss ahead of the Pacific Cup Final.

Papua New Guinea beat the hosts and favourites, NZ Māori XI. It was particularly interesting working with some female umpires from Samoa, Fiji and Vanuatu – my colleague for the final being from the latter - Merielle Kenni, who at 26 I'm sure will go on to achieve great things with the ICC Associate Nations, and hopefully beyond!

9 weeks raced by, and I landed back at Heathrow amongst flooded fields and even some snow along the M4 on the way back to Somerset. Despite the weather, it felt good to be home and to have the English Domestic season just around the corner, but we really needed the weather to improve, and fast! I'd received my first batch of appointments from ECB a couple of weeks prior to leaving NZ, and I was due first up in a red-ball friendly at The Utilita Bowl, Hants v Middlesex on the 21st March. In the days leading up to the game, a couple of other pre-season fixtures across the country were cancelled,

and we thought we had little chance of getting on. But much to our surprise, Southampton was certainly one of the driest parts of the country, and I was soon to become the first umpire to call play in England & Wales for 2024, as Kyle Abbott ambled in to send the first Dukes down towards Sam Robson, with Mike Burns at striker's end.

The weather gradually improved, and with a lot of my cricket in the south during the early part of the season, I somehow avoided any total wash-outs. April and May included lots of 2nd XI Championship cricket and Women's 50-over cricket, before getting stuck into the Charlotte Edwards Cup (Women's T20) in the latter stages of May and June, where I stood in 7 fixtures across that competition – a particular highlight was standing in South East Stars vs Sunrisers, and a debut for me in the middle at The Oval – another ground ticked off the bucket list!

The highlights of my season, and indeed of my umpiring career, arrived in June. Firstly, I'd been given 4 games in the Vitality Blast, building on my 2 appearances in 2023. The most exciting part being that I would be standing in Gloucestershire v Somerset at Bristol, under lights on a Friday night – a fiery affair if ever there was one – and I knew that only too well after seeing plenty of West-Country Cider Derbys over the years! I was pleased to be standing with a good friend in Paul Baldwin, and with weather on the radar our pre-match preparations focussed on tolerance levels for GWL, and how bad it had to get before we decided to pull the plug. Fortunately, we managed to get a full game in, whilst playing through light rain for almost the whole of the second innings, and dealing with a couple of pitch invaders (another new experience for me, as I stood at square-leg trying to be ever the professional *and not laugh* as the security team were slipping and sliding trying to catch the perpetrators in fancy dress!) – the Glorious Gloucesters beating the Wyvern, chasing down 190 in the 19th over, with some of the cleanest hitting I've ever had the privilege of watching from 22-yards, from Ollie Price and Ben Charlesworth. My other three games in the Blast included two trips to Cardiff, and one to Cheltenham – two more where the calculator was out as the all too familiar rainclouds made another appearance.

June was a particularly busy month, as I finally got my house move across the line – something which was on the go since December. Life on the road and on-field is made significantly harder when trying to deal with calls



Not me smirking, as Marnus Labuschagne took one to the missile stump in the Blast.

from estate agents and solicitors, and I don't know how I managed get through it at times! It was a Friday night, and I was in B&Q in Taunton, getting some bits and pieces and looking forward to a week off to get the new pad sorted as my phone rang. It was the boss. That means two things – you've done something wrong, or you're being asked to go and do a game somewhere! I answered hoping it was neither on this occasion, until I heard the words "We would like you to go to Leicester next week and make your first-class debut in the championship. Are you available?". The moment I had been waiting for over the last year and a half on the Professional Umpires' Team. Thankful for the opportunity, and equally thankful to be in good company with Ian Blackwell, I made my way up to Leicester the next day ready for the Sunday start.

My first-class debut was a bit of a baptism of fire...21 wickets on day one, and thankfully



Toby Roland-Jones traps Ben Cox LBW in the second innings.

none owing to an over-keen or nervous 32-year-old in a white coat! I felt remarkably at ease throughout that game, and I'm not sure if it was because I was familiar with several players on both sides, felt that I belonged, or whether because I was with "Blackie" - someone who is always incredibly laid-back and good fun to stand with – but it went well! We both smelt a 2-day finish or at worst lunchtime on day 3! Day 2 and the pitch had flattened out, after Leicestershire and Middlesex were

rolled for 179 and 86 respectively the day before.

Leicestershire batted all day reaching 311/8 by close, a

lead of plenty we thought. Day 3 was memorable in that I witnessed the worst 'suspected' concussion I'd ever seen, with a ball from Ben Mike hitting Leus du Plooy flush on the side of the helmet, the ball ricocheting back past me at the bowlers' end and all the way to mid-off – how he was fit and cleared to continue, I will never know! The afternoon also included a code of conduct and a post-match disciplinary meeting – not what was required with the game going deep into day three (and past 7pm) before Leicestershire finally claimed that 20th wicket!

July and August were hectic as we entered white-ball cricket again, with the start of the Metro Bank One Day Cup and The Hundred. My involvement being on-field in 9 MBODC games, and one as fourth in the Men's Hundred – a month that included over 2,600 miles being put on the clock. And there was a particularly busy stretch including four games in four days, as I went from Scarborough to Nottingham, down to Cardiff, before heading back up to Worcester – it's not all as glamorous as it might seem at times – but I wouldn't change it for the world! At the end of August, following my debut at Leicestershire, I was given another first-class game, this time Derbyshire vs Glamorgan at Derby. I knew things had gone well in the first game, and I was very keen to continue hitting the ground running and to put in another good shift in my second game – after all, fortunes and reputations can change very quickly in sport! It was another good performance, and another memorable game as Derbyshire eased home by 10 wickets, their first win in the championship at their home ground since before Covid! More unexpected issues to deal with too including high winds which prevented the application/removal of covers on grounds of H&S, and a broken-down outfield mower which nearly delayed the start of play on day two.



A proud moment receiving my first-class blazer from Tim Robinson.

The year was rounded off nicely in October, as I was recognised as the 391st First-Class umpire to stand in the Championship. In recognition, I was honoured to receive my first-class Blazer from Tim Robinson at our end of season meeting – a real privilege and something which represents the last 10 years of hard work and dedication to the game. So, all in all, reflecting on 2024, the word that perhaps sums it up best is 'proud'. It's been a great journey so far, and I'm ever thankful for all the opportunities I've had in WEPL and Somerset to learn my craft and get to where I am currently, and most importantly the help from many people in the local and regional set up to develop as an official. Hopefully this journey is one with plenty more chapters, and many more first-class outings in 2025 and beyond...

ADRIAN BULL – A FIRST-CLASS SEASON

Gloucestershire CCC First XI scorer, Adrian Bull, provides us with a behind-the-scenes look at scoring for The Shire in 2024, a season that saw him record 24,438 runs and 778 wickets in all formats of the game.

Once the First-Class fixtures were released and added to the diary, planning, practice and organisation for the upcoming season began in earnest. Computer, pens and scorebooks were readied and Playing Regulations read.

As First Class (FC) Scorers, we all belong to the 'Association of Scorers in Professional Cricket'. Our pre-season zoom gathering in late February updated us all on the latest developments ahead of the new season, but also informed us of the need to undertake and pass the ECB Scoring Authorisation test. This is to ensure that we are all working in the same manner to operate the ECB-funded PCS Pro scoring system to record the correct information ball by ball.

The main concern of FC scorers is still the lack of access to players' and match officials' areas (PMOA). In essence, two hours before a T20 or 50-over match, scorers have no access to any players' or umpires' areas, including changing/dining/umpires' rooms, while pitch access is also restricted. So quite how we are supposed to get team details and sheets signed ready for the toss is beyond me. This has been an ongoing bone of contention for FC scorers ever since access was removed post-COVID - in these matches it seems we are not classed as match officials!

So, on to the cricket season.

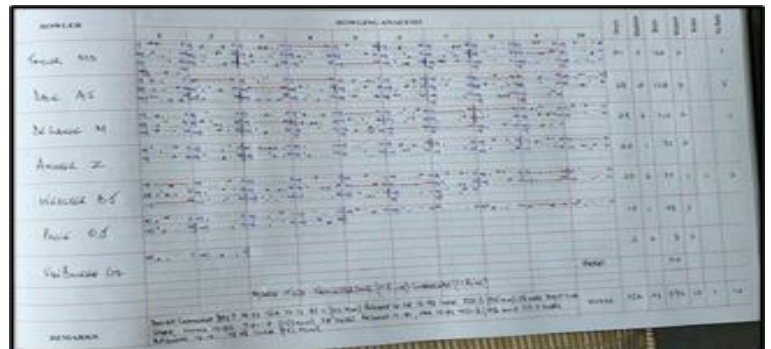
The monsoon weather of February and March continued and resulted in planned pre-season games at The Parks and a return in Bristol being totally washed out. The first championship match in Derby was again another victim of the weather. We turned up on all four days in hope rather than expectation, but the outfield was completely waterlogged and never improved.

The months of April and May entailed seven Championship games in eight weeks, back-to-back. Hard and relentless going for both players and scorers as scorers travel with team members or on the team coach for longer away trips and stay in the same hotels.

June brought the first block of T20 matches. It feels like we were now working part-time with only two games a week for a while. That routine was rudely interrupted, though. After playing on a Thursday evening at Glamorgan (a last-ball victory), we were back in Bristol on the Friday evening to face local rivals Somerset in the 'Cider Derby'. Another

victory with high emotions in the late-night finish. By 9.00am the next morning, the team are on the coach heading off on a six-and-a-half-hour journey to Scarborough to start a four-day Championship match at 11.00am on the Sunday morning. The result didn't go our way.

After the midweek return from the north, thoughts turned to the start of the Cheltenham Festival on the Sunday, with Glamorgan being the visitors. It turned out to be an epic match with Glamorgan reaching 592 in their second innings and losing their last wicket off the final ball of the 152nd over with the scores tied.



The scorebook entry for the remarkable Glamorgan second innings.

Apart from festival grounds, scoring facilities at FC level are mostly very good. Rooms with power points, sun shades, decent chairs and tea/coffee available. Cheltenham, although giving a beautiful view from the balcony, is an al fresco position. It gave myself and my Glamorgan colleague, together with members of the press, a few very uncomfortable days. Some Baltic-style cold weather led us to grab anything and everything to keep warm before bringing blankets and hats for Day 2. We then had to cope with the rain. Everything needs to be covered up as soon as possible before electric leads and cables start dripping with water and the drips from the unsuitable umbrellas (if they hadn't already blown away) running down your back. I carry a plastic tablecloth to cover up as best as possible if play continues until the inevitable.



Glamorgan scorer, Morgan Barrell

The T20 final group games of fixtures followed. After a couple of late victories, it left Gloucestershire needing Hampshire to beat Essex for us to qualify for a quarter-final away match at Birmingham Bears. It was a big thumbs up as Hampshire duly obliged.

Before the September 6th showdown with the Bears, eight 50-over Metro Bank and two more Championship games lay ahead. A mixed outcome in the 50-over games and a drawn championship match v Leicestershire in August before the visit of Northamptonshire. By early afternoon on Day One the match had been abandoned - 'A

foreseeable risk to batters' was the reason given – I will make no further comment. This was the second match v Northants which I have been involved in that has been abandoned, the first being the COVID match in 2020.

Interspersed amongst the 50-over games, I was one of the scorers for the Hundred double-header in Cardiff between Welsh Fire and Birmingham Phoenix. As scorers, you feel at times that all you are needed for is to wave back to acknowledge the umpires' signals. And if you thought PMOA was a problem to get into the ground, this was something else. You need a specially assigned pass, a parking spot not very close if you



The music stage for The Hundred.

are lucky, airport-style security checks of your cricket bag and then once in the ground, well..... If you like fireworks, a disco stage twenty yards from the scoreboard with bass music pumping out relentlessly, this is the place for you. The games seem totally controlled by Sky TV - toss at the side of the pitch, the match starts when TV is ready, strategic time-outs – oh, wait, the TV adverts haven't quite finished.

On to Edgbaston and a convincing Friday night victory over the Bears gave us a day out at T20 Finals day. But before that, in the following week that led up to Saturday's extravaganza, a small matter of a four-day match at Lord's v Middlesex which resulted in a hard-fought victory that set us up for Edgbaston. Lord's really is a special place and what you hear about the lunches I can personally vouch for - the only trouble is, you haven't got enough time to eat it all!

T20 Finals Day beckons. We travelled up to Edgbaston by coach on the Friday, where the players were allocated a two-hour training/ practise slot. On to the ECB-allocated hotel afterwards, to discover Somerset were also staying there. Next day, the team left the hotel at 11.30am as we were involved in the second semi-final. We faced a very confident Sussex side but just like the quarter-final, Sussex were put to the sword in another impressive, all-round performance. It set up the 'Cider Final' as Somerset had overcome Surrey earlier in the day. A packed Edgbaston crowd that was by now 'well oiled' were able to witness the total demolition of Somerset and a first T20 title for the 'Glorious'. A scorer's medal was handed over which is something new and really appreciated by us scoreboard residents.



By the Tuesday following, the first of the final two Championship matches was underway. Two defeats followed but understandably, the euphoria of the T20 victory was still present.

My final scoring duty of the season was the England v Australia ODI at Bristol on 29th September. Sadly, the game was cut short by the weather, giving Australia a DLS victory. It really did rain that day and I got soaked to the skin walking back to the car. The season really did finish just as it had started!



GACO COMMITTEE CONTACTS 2025/26

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GACO ONLINE SHOP



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The GACO shop, which can be accessed via www.gaco.org.uk (or use the link below) is up and running ready to do business prior to the new season. Order any item from the shop, which comes complete with GACO logo and have your item(s) delivered directly to your door. Everything from match clothing to leisurewear – check it out now:

[Clothing and merchandise - GACO](http://www.gaco.org.uk)

THE WEST OF ENGLAND PYRAMID 2025



Premier One (Tier 1 – M3)

Bath, Bedminster, Bridgwater, Bristol, Burbage & Easton Royal, Downend, Frocester, Potterne, Taunton St Andrews, Thornbury.

Premier Two (Tier 2 – M4)

WEPL Gloucestershire/Wiltshire Division

Cheltenham, Chippenham, Corsham, Dumbleton, Goatacre, Hatherley & Reddings, Painswick, Purton, Wootton Bassett, Tewkesbury.

WEPL Bristol/Somerset Division

Bishopston, Clevedon, Congresbury, Downend, Golden Hill, Keynsham, Lansdown, Midsomer Norton, Taunton CC, Weston-super-Mare.

Tier 3 – M4

WEPL Bristol & North-East Somerset Division

Bedminster 2nd X1, Bradley Stoke, Brislington, Bristol 2nd X1, Bristol Pakistanis, Bristol West Indian Phoenix, Frenchay, Knowle, Old Bristolians Pak Bristolians, Twyford House.

WEPL Gloucestershire Division

Aston Ingham, Bourton Vale, Charlton Kings, Chipping Sodbury, Frocester 2nd X1, Gloucester, Hawkesbury Upton, Langford, Stroud, Thornbury 2nd XI.

WEPL Somerset Division

Bridgwater 2nd XI, Butleigh, Ilminster, North Perrott, Shapwick & Polden, Taunton Deane, Temple Cloud, Wellington, Wembdon, Yeovil.

WEPL Wiltshire Division

Avebury, Biddestone, Corsham 2nd XI, Hinton Charterhouse, Marshfield, Potterne 2nd XI, Swindon, Trowbridge, Westbury, Winsley.

Tier 4 – M5

Bristol & District Senior Division

Bath 2nd XI, Claverham, Cleeve, Coalpit Heath, Downend 2nd XI, Golden Hill 2nd XI, Hanham, Potterne 2nd XI, Stapleton, Winterbourne.

Gloucestershire County League Division One

Cheltenham II X1, Cheltenham Civil Service, Chipping Campden, Cirencester, Kingsholm, Lydney, Redmarley, Rockhampton, Tetbury, Thornbury 2nd XI.

WEPL Women's Premier Division

Bath, Bridgwater, Cheltenham. Devizes, Frenchay, Golden Hill, Hatherley & Reddings, Taunton Deane, Wotton Bassett.

GLOBAL GAINS

GACO umpire, John Evans, is celebrating after being named cricket's World Over-70 Player of the Year for 2025.

Evo captained England to the inaugural Over-70s World Cup last summer, scoring 227 runs in five innings, including 78 in the seven-wicket final victory over Australia at Wormsley.

In addition to playing a huge part in the World Cup success, John was a key member of the Gloucestershire side that became National Over-70 champions in 2023 and has also helped England beat Australia in two Silver Ashes series.



John, who will turn 74 this year, is a former non-league footballer and highly-respected manager who lists Gloucester City and Forest Green among the clubs he represented with aplomb as well as being a highly successful captain of Frocester CC, where he is now chairman, for many years.

Evo has one final international target in mind, with the next Over-70 World Cup taking place in New Zealand in March 2026. In the meantime, he'll be playing for the County Septuagenarians, turning out for one of the Frocester sides and umpiring in WEPL Tier 3 over the course of the upcoming summer.



Gloucestershire Association
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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Scorer **Mark Wiltshire** falls under this month's *Officiating Matters* spotlight.

Position in GACO	Scorer
Profession – now or previously	Retired Local Government Officer
For how long have you umpired/scored?	Started in 1975, then started again when I finished playing in 2014.
Main cricket team played for / associated with	Hatherley & Reddings
Role in that team (eg opening bat)	Opening bat (4th XI)
Favourite ever cricketer	Vivian Richards – made the game look effortless.



What is your favourite sporting moment?	2012 Champions League Final (Chelsea beating Bayern Munich)
If you could learn a skill instantly, what would it be?	Play the saxophone
Saturday night: Go home or go out?	Go home

Name three things other than cricket that you enjoy doing.	Travelling, spending time on the allotment and watching Chelsea.
Name three things you really don't like.	Rudeness, untidiness and shopping.

What were your best & worst subjects at school?	Best: English. Worst: French.
Describe your favourite meal	Roast beef, Sunday dinner.
Create a 3-item meal that you really wouldn't like	Pie, liquor & mash.
If you were to write a book, what would it be about?	My life supporting Chelsea. I've met some wonderful friends and visited some beautiful countries over the last 57 years.
Three words to describe yourself.	Respectful, punctual & loyal.
What is your favourite saying/quote/mantra?	You're never too old to learn.

What is your 'nightmare' scenario?	Being stuck in a motorway traffic jam with Eddie Baker going on about the 50 he missed out on in 2006, that Frank Lampard tackle & VAR.
If you were stranded on a desert island, which three things would you like to have with you?	A knife, Roman Abramovich's autobiography and a radio.

Greatest sportsperson ever	Daley Thompson
Greatest invention ever	Electricity
Greatest band ever	The Jam
Greatest ever film or musical	Shawshank Redemption

If you could meet one person in the world, who would it be and why?	Carlo Ancelotti, in my opinion the greatest football manager.
What are/were your hopes for the 2025 cricket season?	Good weather, good colleagues and Gloucestershire to win League 2 of the County Championship.

AND FINALLYWHAT'S YOUR DECISION?

In a County U18, 2-day game, the sixth wicket falls and the umpire calls "Time" to commence an interval for drinks. When does the next batter's innings commence?

The seventh wicket falls immediately after the interval for drinks. When does the next batter's innings commence?



January's Conundrum

It's the last over of a B & D Senior fixture and the home team needs 19 to win.



The batters take a two off the first ball, while the second is a legside wide that goes for four. The third delivery is missed and taken by the wicketkeeper, with no runs scored. Ball four is a no ball that strikes the WK's helmet that's on the ground behind him before rolling over the boundary. The next ball is played into the covers and the batters scurry a single before the ball is thrown at the stumps, missed by everyone and by the time it has gone for four, the batters have completed a second run. Ball six is edged

by the batter on to his helmet and clears the WK before also rolling over the boundary. The seventh ball sees the batters run a single before two fielders collide, clash heads and blame each other, allowing another run to be completed, while the final delivery is hit high in the air, striking the electric wires that are connected to a pair of pylons situated outside the boundary. At the pre-toss meeting, it was agreed that the local rules are that should this happen, then four be awarded, but to complicate matters, the batters have completed a run prior to the wire being struck and after the electrical intervention, the ball is caught by a diving fielder who seems to be in shock as the ball lodges in his outstretched left hand. When the chaos has finally subsided, you call time and consult with both your colleague and the scorers. What do you decide in regard to the result of the game?

During the chaos, the scorers missed a run somewhere in the over and the home team had actually reached their total off the penultimate delivery of their innings. Irrespective, the four scored off the last ball ensured their victory:

Ball 1: 2 runs.

Ball 2: 1 + 4 extras.

Ball 3: 0 runs.

Ball 4: 1 + 5 penalty runs.

Ball 5: 1 + 4 overthrows.

Ball 6: 0 runs (dead ball).

Ball 7: 1 run (match won).

Ball 8: 4 runs.



USEFUL LINKS

GACO Website: www.gaco.org.uk

Twitter (X): @GlosUmps

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QUIZ Answers

1. Bedminster 2. Burbage & Easton Royal 3. Taunton Deane 4. Keynsham 5. Wotton Bassett 6. Corsham 7. Hatherley & Reddings 8. Bristol West Indians Phoenix 9. Tewkesbury 10. Rockhampton 11. Potterne 12. Taunton St Andrews 13. Stapleton 14. Marshfield 15. Painswick 16. Twyford House 17. Frocester 18. Lansdown 19. Shapwick & Poldren 20. Charlton Kings.

SCORERS' QUIZ Answers

- a. 6 balls in an over
- b. 11 players per side
- c. 2 umpires per match
- d. 10 dismissals in an innings
- e. 50 runs in a half century
- f. Law 3 The Scorers
- g. 0 runs in a maiden (credited to the bowler)
- h. 1 penalty run for a no ball
- i. 0 runs scored when a catch is taken
- j. 0 runs scored if leg byes are disallowed
- k. 5 penalty runs for ball hitting helmet
- l. 0 runs scored if a striker with a runner is Run Out themself
- m. 5 runs credited to the bowler when the striker hits a No Ball for 4
- n. 4 runs credited to the batter when the striker hits a No Ball for 4
- o. 1 run credited to No Ball extras when the striker hits a No Ball for 4
- p. 1 run scored if the batters run 2 and the umpire signals short run
- q. 5 runs credited to the bowler if the umpire signals Wide then Boundary 4
- r. 1 run scored if the batters run 2 but 1 run is needed to win
- s. Lead by 150 runs in a 4-day match to enforce the follow-on
- t. 20 overs in the last hour.

OM (March 2025) Contributors

Phil Mattingley, Sue Drinkwater, Les Clemenson, Craig Blakeway, Ben Peverall, Adrian Bull, Jim Hyland, Mark Wiltshire, Bob Hampshire, Bob Owen.

We hope you've enjoyed this edition of 'Officiating Matters' and thank-you to all our contributors. If you have anything that you think might be of interest to our ever-growing readership, please email development@gaco.org.uk with your offering. The next edition is due out in two months' time at the beginning of May. Let's hope the weather's improved by then.