

# OFFICIATING MATTERS

#YESITDOES

MARCH 2026 EDITION

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Hi everyone,

Hope you are all well and like me hoping that this seemingly endless rain finally stops and the grounds' teams can push on with their preparations for the rapidly approaching season.

I'd like to offer a big thank-you to Craig Blakeway (GACO Publicity Officer) who has stepped down from his committee role and the position will not be refilled.

With the new GACO website up and running thanks to all of Rishi's endeavours and hard work and publicity largely being handled by Nicky Clark and the GCF, Craig's role has diminished. However, we are delighted that Craig has kindly offered to still add the illustrations to the Officiating Matters, working alongside Bob and my thanks go to Craig for this and for all his publicity work over recent years.

More good news - with the ECB Scorers pathway finally up and running, I am delighted that Malcolm Doody (Scorer Development) and Mike Turner (Scorer Appointments) have accepted these new roles to work alongside Sue Drinkwater, who will retain responsibility for Education and Training. Both Malcolm and Mike were co-opted onto the GACO committee at the recent AGM.

By now a large number of clubs have arranged pre-league season friendlies and early cup fixtures- just a further reminder to assist the Appointments Team to check and update availability on WTU when and where necessary.

Finally, a reminder from me that across the officiating 'world', the number of recruits and in certain areas retention of officials, remains an issue. Retained Officials numbers continue to decline for a number of reasons. There are think tanks in place across our region and nationally to attempt to come up with recruitment plans and ideas to halt and even reverse the trend, but can I ask that if you have any suggestions or ideas - no matter how big, small or random, please can you let one of the GACO committee know and we can discuss and look to see what mileage can be achieved.

Look forward to seeing or catching up with you soon.

*Phil*



## The PRESIDENT'S PITCH

***GACO President, Clive Poulton, poses an important question for cricket officials and players alike, to ponder.***

**How are you feeling?**



Speaking with a fair number of people from various backgrounds over the past few months, I've been struck by how many have said that they don't listen to or watch the news broadcasts any longer. Some major reasons stated were that they found the reports unsettling and depressing, which was fuelling disillusionment. This really had an impact and has caused me to reflect on why this is happening.

In a world where we can be constantly bombarded with information through the media and where the degree of change and uncertainty is almost unprecedented, what potential impact could this have on our sense of wellbeing and mental health?

There has been considerable focus on mental health in recent times. There is greater awareness of the fact that we have more information which impacts people through from early childhood to later in life. There is greater understanding today of the psychological and physical issues which can have real consequences for people's mental health.

I grew up as part of the baby boom of the mid-forties, following the second world war. Of course, there were challenges in post-war Britain, just as there were before. But I believe that my generation was fortunate in so much as life appeared simpler, more gently paced and where there was greater certainty in employment prospects. The cost of living was manageable, even without credit cards! Some of my friends of a similar age can be critical of today's world. Although I understand these perceptions (construed by some as "facts"), we grew up and worked in a different era and we need to understand the reality and pressures of modern life on the generations that have followed.

So, thinking about our current environment, whilst there have been significant developments in technology, social change and the freedom of choice for many (not all), there remain major challenges that lie ahead. These include political and international developments, economic pressures, the advance of artificial intelligence and the potential impact on employment. In addition, in our society today, there is evidence that there is a lack of fear of authority which can result in not only a lack of respect for others but also on a sense of personal responsibility.

How do these issues potentially impact recreational cricket league fixtures on a Saturday afternoon? As we know, competitive games by their nature may involve conflict. As officials, we are happy to see a competitive game, played in the right spirit and with many matches played in this way, it's great to be a part of it. Nevertheless, in recent seasons we have seen an increase in the incidents of unacceptable behaviour, resulting in necessary sanctions being applied. At a guess, it's probably fair to say that the majority of players involved in league cricket ranges from about 18 years of age to mid-forties. In officiating, we are unaware of the pressures and challenges players may be experiencing away from the cricket field. All we see is what takes place during the game.

Reflecting on the importance of mental health, what do we need to be aware of as it affects us all as cricket officials? Of critical importance is for the officiating team, umpires and scorers, to display effective teamwork and cohesion. Clear communication between the on-field officials and scorers is essential, demonstrating the interdependence between them. Together with the captains, this represents the “whole team” approach to match management.



Communication between scorers and umpires starts before play commences. Introductions, especially if the officials have not met previously and a dialogue about how we want to work together. I have been an advocate of shortwave radios to maintain clear communication during play for some time. Checking in with each other at the drinks breaks, tea interval and between innings also contributes to effective teamworking.

The connection between the umpires themselves requires clarity on how they will work together in managing the game. The need to communicate both verbally and through their body language is key. To be aware of any rising tensions between the players and to work in unison to prevent any further escalation is such an important aspect of the official's role. Prevention is better than cure. Supporting each other in this way will be visible to the players and avoids the possibility of them perceiving a fragmented approach by the umpires and possibly seeking to exploit this. Greater understanding of the need to work as a team reduces the burden that can result in mental health issues.

The skills and approaches in facilitating the game include firmness, approachability, empathy, a quiet word where necessary, a smile and a balanced use of humour to reduce tension and avoid negative stress. In short, we can categorise stress in two main ways which have both positive and negative aspects.



The word stress usually conveys negativity associated with issues such as anxiety, fear, frustration, pessimism, low self-esteem and anger. These conditions are likely to have an impact on our mental health and can affect us all from time to time. Distress can be another word for these conditions.

Conversely, positive stress (eustress) is motivational. Examples include looking forward to and succeeding with a challenge, energy and commitment to achieving a goal, being acknowledged as a valued member of a team, overcoming a setback and recognising the progress we are making. These aspects contribute to our positive mental health. This is so important in personal development during our umpiring and scoring journeys because we can be subjected to criticism and challenge on the field of play and also on occasions in biased captains' reports, where their judgement is expressed on our decision-making and possibly other perceptions. How many other examples exist whereby an appraisal takes place after each job in a recreational setting?

In the face of this, to maintain a balance of objectivity in regard to our performance is a valuable part of self-development. As so many colleagues in our Association have said in conversation: "Look in the mirror at the end of the day and ask yourself honestly, how did I do?" What went well that I'm pleased about? What did I learn today and will do differently next time? Equally, listen to and reflect on feedback, both formal and informal, from others. Tips, ideas, thoughts and strategies gleaned from colleagues, observers and other stakeholders are always worth considering and giving a go to see if they work for you.



In GACO, we are committed to the role we are asked to play in training new officials. We endeavour to support our members in their ongoing personal development through mentoring and communication. This is a priority as we strive to build a community where all our members feel included and proud to be part of a worthwhile organisation.

However, there is always more to do. It is fundamental that we continue to increase our understanding of the environment we are working in, not only by acknowledging the challenges we face but also in recognising the progress we are making. This will enable us to develop the strategies to manage the changes and challenges that lie ahead and to maintain and grow our level of success as we move forward, embracing whatever the future may hold.

## THE SILVER ASHES



England Over-70s, captained by our own John Evans of Frocester CC, have become the first (and only) England side to win The Ashes this winter.

England won all three tests against the Old Enemy by 7 wickets, 1 run and 26 runs respectively, with Evo contributing 28, 40 & 11 not out with the bat.

Following on from their Ashes success, the team made their way to New Zealand, hoping to retain the Over-70s World Cup that they lifted on home soil two years ago. England made

a promising start to their campaign with a 10-wicket trouncing of India in their opening fixture and following up with a 120-run win over Canada. A 6-wicket loss to Australia, who chased down 248 to win, stalled their progress however, before a 6-wicket success of their own against Sri Lanka saw them return to winning ways. At the time of writing, England were second in the 8-team table and looking to have a good chance of securing a semi-final place.



*Second photo: England captain & WEPL umpire, John Evans, with Billy Bowden and his infamous crooked finger.*

## GACO AGM

The 2026 AGM was held at Thornbury CC last Thursday, with nearly 40 members in attendance. Reports from each of the officers were proffered, resulting in the 2025 committee being re-elected *en bloc* for another twelve months. The formal proceedings were followed by questions from the floor with a number of interesting and relevant topics raised.

Thank you to Thornbury CC for being excellent hosts and thank you to all the clubs around the county that have offered their facilities for GACO events over the past twelve months and all those who will continue do so over the coming year.

# UMPIRE DEVELOPMENT

## Umpire Advancement



Umpires who may be interested in seeking to advance their grading for the 2027 season should consult the updated 'Umpiring Pathway' documentation that has just been released by ECB and is available to view via [gaco.org.uk](http://gaco.org.uk).

This provides details of the criteria required to advance from one grade to the next and level descriptions of the grades themselves.

It should be noted that an umpire advancing their grade makes them eligible for promotion to a higher level of officiating, but doesn't guarantee it, grade advancement and tier advancement being two separate entities.

After reading the documentation, anyone who wishes to apply for grade advancement should email Bob Owen at [development@gaco.org.uk](mailto:development@gaco.org.uk) for a copy of the application form, which needs to be completed and returned by the end of April.

For clarity, decisions regarding umpires moving between tiers are made shortly after the end of a league season and are based on captains' feedback supported by observation outcomes.

## Qualifying to be a Panel/League Umpire

Prospective competition umpires need to complete the ECB Umpire Course which provides a practical introduction to officiating (effectively a Stage 1) followed by the Umpire Development Course which goes deeper into the laws and their interpretation and elements of required fieldcraft (effectively a Stage 2). The next UDC is being held at Frocester CC on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March.

After completing these courses, there is an 'Are You Ready to Call Play?' practical day, which involves umpiring part of a pre-season fixture with colleague and mentoring support.

There are two AYRTCP days available this year:

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April at Hatherley & Reddings CC (H & R v Cheltenham Civil Service) TBC.

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April at Chipping Sodbury CC (Chipping Sodbury v Mangotsfield).

If you wish to attend either AYRTCP day, please contact Bob Owen at [umpire.development@gaco.org.uk](mailto:umpire.development@gaco.org.uk).

## Umpire Observations

Last season, Bob Hampshire & Les Clemenson observed all Premier One umpires over the course of the season, while 40 other WEPL/B&D/GCL matches were observed by Boundary Edge Developers in 2025 (24 to support umpire advancement via the ECB

Pathway and 16 purely development observations) with a total of 61 umpires involved. In addition, 8 Colleague Observations took place.

This summer, Bob & Les are looking to observe all WEPL Premier Two and some Premier One umpires, while it is hoped to carry out a similar number of observations to last season in the other tiers.

When allocating observations, we look at: (1) Officials requiring ECB observations as part of their grading advancement application (2) Umpires in their first year (3) Umpires in their 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> seasons (4) As many other officials as we can fit in, given the resources available. Umpire observations are seen as real, practical, development opportunities and it's our wish to extend this opportunity as widely as possible across the GACO umpiring community.

### **Umpire Mentoring**

Darren Turl will be contacting prospective umpiring mentors shortly and matching up mentors with mentees prior to the season commencing. If, for any reason, you are not aware of your mentor for 2026 once the season gets underway, please contact Darren at [recruitment@gaco.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@gaco.org.uk).

## **BOWLING & DIRECTIVE CARDS**

With the bi-annual GACO Conference being held next month and WEPL holding its pre-season seminar two weeks later, it is not intended to host a GACO pre-season event this year as everything will be covered at the other two meetings.

Members who attended last week's AGM collected their bowling & directive cards then, while the cards will also be available for collection at the conference in a fortnight's time and at the WEPL pre-season seminar at the end of the month.

## **GACO WEBSITE**



The new GACO website has been up and running now for two months, this inaugural period seeing a huge increase in the number of hits.

The site contains a large amount of information of interest to new, prospective and established umpires and scorers alike, from competition regulations, the Umpire & Scorer Pathways, laws of cricket, upcoming umpire & scorer courses, committee contacts and, of course, back issues of 'Officiating Matters'.

If anyone has anything they would like adding to the website or think something needs amending, please get in touch with Rishi to let him know.

# MEMBERSHIP MATTERS by John Lindley

## DBS Annual Renewals

It appears that in some of the recent messages from DBS(Gov) about renewal of the DBS update service, the link to their website has not been working.

There have also been a number of instances where these messages have found their way to Spam or Junk mailboxes.

So, just a reminder of what was communicated in the March 2025 Edition of Officiating Matters:

For the annual DBS 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:

- DBS(Gov) [donotreply@dbs.gov.uk](mailto:donotreply@dbs.gov.uk) with Subject heading: “FYI: Action required to renew your Update Service subscription”
- ECB Safeguarding Team <[dbs@ecb.disclosures.co.uk](mailto:dbs@ecb.disclosures.co.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 ECB.disclosures system*) that you will need to use to access the two different sets of records. The ECB message confirms that the service is free of charge.

If you respond first to the ECB reminder, i.e. the [dbs@ecb.disclosures.co.uk](mailto:dbs@ecb.disclosures.co.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@dbs.gov.uk](mailto:donotreply@dbs.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.**

However, if you try to respond first to the [donotreply@dbs.gov.uk](mailto:donotreply@dbs.gov.uk) message and the link in their e-mail doesn't work you can access the relevant web page directly via <https://secure.crbonline.gov.uk/crsc/subscriber> but when you have completed their requirements you will also need to log-in separately to the ECB system to complete that questionnaire.

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.



## 2026 GACO CONFERENCE

This bi-annual event takes place in a fortnight's time on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March at Eastwood Park Conference Centre near Thornbury. A very interesting line-up of speakers has been arranged, while the catering at this event is always of an impressively high standard. The @GACOFoodCorrespondent always speaks very highly of the culinary offerings at Eastwood Park, while he usually enjoys the conference, too....



**The conference is a morning/afternoon event and if you haven't already done so, please confirm your attendance by contacting John Lindley at [treasurer@gaco.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@gaco.org.uk) in the next day or so as he needs to finalise numbers for catering purposes.**

## GACO CALENDAR

Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> March	Umpire Development Course	Frocester CC
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> March	GACO Conference	Eastwood Park, Thornbury
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> March	WEPL Pre-Season Seminar	Bradley Stoke CC
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> April (TBC)	Are you Ready to Call Play?	Hatherley & Reddings CC
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> April	BE Observers' Meeting	Online
Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> April	Are you Ready to Call Play?	Chipping Sodbury CC

## SCORING MATTERS #YesItDoes with Sue Drinkwater

### GACO Scorer Training

On 8<sup>th</sup> February, GACO held a scorers' day at Stroud CC attended by 17 scorers and 4 tutors/helpers.

The aim of the morning session was to go through the new scorers' pathway and explain how scorers could progress to the next level up, should they wish to and to discuss the skills, knowledge and competencies at each level. Scorers were given a chance to ask questions regarding how this related specifically to them and find out what scoring courses were available to help them meet the progression criteria.

It was great to be able to meet up and talk scoring all day and thanks to Stroud CC for hosting us.

To progress from Team Scorer (S5) to Recreational Scorer (S4), one of the criteria is attendance on a new scoring course, called Scoring Techniques, so the afternoon was spent running this course for the first time in Gloucestershire. 13 scorers attended, as it's also a great way to refresh your scoring skills and get back into scorebook mode ready for the upcoming season.

Scoring Techniques covers:

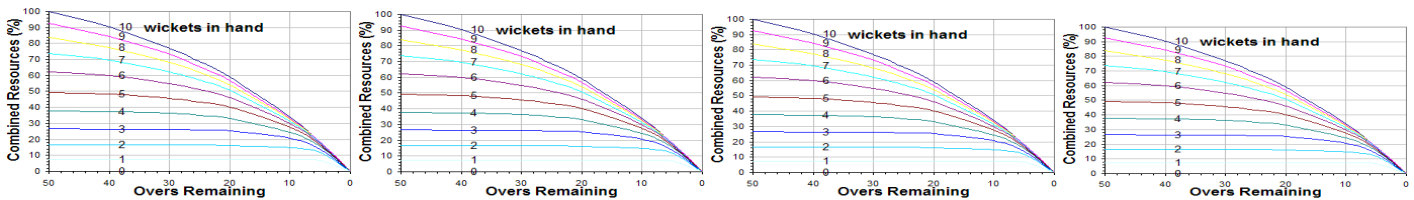
- Your scoring routine
- The umpire and scorer team
- Scoring practice
- Laws of Cricket (including Dead Ball, Substitutes and Disallowed Leg byes)
- Penalty Runs
- Defining a result

WEPL has a current initiative to upskill their scorers in the use of DLS, so has provisioned 4 courses across the 3 counties they cover (Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Somerset) the first of which took place on 15<sup>th</sup> February at Hatherley & Reddings CC.

The remaining DLS courses plus two other scoring courses are available as below, with booking links for anyone wishing to book on.

DLS @ Taunton Deane CC, Somerset - Sunday 15 February 10:00 - 12:00  
[Summary - ECB Duckworth Lewis Stern \(DLS\) - Somerset - Tanton Deane CC](#)

PCS Pro @ Stroud CC - Saturday 28 February 09:30 - 16:30  
[Summary - PCS Pro Scoring Course - Gloucestershire - Stroud CC](#)



Statistics @ Thornbury CC - Sunday 1 March 14:00 - 17:00  
[Summary - ECB Statistics Scoring Course - Gloucestershire - Thornbury CC](#)

DLS @ Corsham CC, Wiltshire - Saturday 14 March 10:00 - 13:00  
[Summary - ECB Duckworth Lewis Stern \(DLS\) - Wiltshire - Corsham CC](#)

DLS @ Bedminster CC, Bristol – Saturday 11 April 10:30 – 13:30  
[Summary – ECB Duckworth Lewis Stern \(DLS\) – Bedminster CC](#)

The Statistics course (at Thornbury CC) is another brand-new module and is a requirement for accreditation at Representative Game Scorer Recreational (S3) level and could also be of interest to umpires to practice their match interruption calculations and gain further skills into working together as an umpire and scorer team. The course objectives are:

- Gain knowledge of the types of calculations required by scorers
- Understand the role of the umpire and scorer in match interruptions
- Know how to manage match interruptions
- Understand how to calculate over rates and match points

## Scorer Mentors Wanted – Can You Help?

As we continue to welcome newly-qualified scorers into clubs across the county, we are keen to ensure that no one feels they are starting their scoring journey alone.

We would like to link each of our new scorers with a more experienced colleague who can offer guidance, reassurance and practical support during their first season or two. This is not about formal assessment or heavy commitment — simply about being a friendly, knowledgeable point of contact.

Will you be willing to join a small team of volunteer mentor scorers?

Mentor training will be available, and the mentoring team will work together to share experiences and support one another as the scheme develops. You won't be left to "reinvent the wheel", and the more mentors we have, the lighter the commitment for everyone.

Mentoring is a wonderful opportunity to give back to the next generation of scorers. A quick conversation before a first match, help with a tricky law query, or reassurance after a challenging game can make a huge difference to someone finding their feet.

If you are interested in becoming a scoring mentor, please contact the County Lead Scorer – Development ([scorer.development@gaco.org.uk](mailto:scorer.development@gaco.org.uk)). We will be delighted to hear from you.

Together, we can ensure that Gloucestershire's scoring community continues to grow in confidence, skill and enjoyment.

## GACO COMMITTEE CONTACTS 2026/27

Post	Name	E-Mail	Post	Name	E-Mail
Chairman	Phil Mattingley	<a href="mailto:chair@gaco.org.uk">chair@gaco.org.uk</a>	Umpire Development	Bob Owen	<a href="mailto:umpire.development@gaco.org.uk">umpire.development@gaco.org.uk</a>
Secretary	Andrew Davis	<a href="mailto:davchu08@outlook.com">davchu08@outlook.com</a>	Web Development	Rishi Maktedar	<a href="mailto:secretary@gaco.org.uk">secretary@gaco.org.uk</a>
Treasurer	John Lindley	<a href="mailto:treasurer@gaco.org.uk">treasurer@gaco.org.uk</a>	Umpire Recruitment	Darren Turl	<a href="mailto:umpire.recruitment@gaco.org.uk">umpire.recruitment@gaco.org.uk</a>
Umpire Appointments	Steve Johnson	<a href="mailto:umpire.appointments@gaco.org.uk">umpire.appointments@gaco.org.uk</a>	Umpire Education	Bob Hampshire	<a href="mailto:umpire.education@gaco.org.uk">umpire.education@gaco.org.uk</a>
County Lead Scorer (Education)	Sue Drinkwater	<a href="mailto:scorers@gaco.org.uk">scorers@gaco.org.uk</a>	County Lead Scorer (Development)	Malcolm Doody	<a href="mailto:Scorer.Development@gaco.org.uk">Scorer.Development@gaco.org.uk</a>
County Lead Scorer (Appointments)	Mike Turner	<a href="mailto:scorer.appointments@gaco.org.uk">scorer.appointments@gaco.org.uk</a>	GCF	Nicky Clarke	<a href="mailto:Nicky.clarke@gloucestershirecricketfoundation.org">Nicky.clarke@gloucestershirecricketfoundation.org</a>
Welfare Officer	Robin Scott	<a href="mailto:welfare@gaco.org.uk">welfare@gaco.org.uk</a>	Please note that umpire/scorer email addresses are now prefaced by umpire or scorer to differentiate between the two.		

## AVAILABILITY

To ensure you make the most of your umpiring summer, please update your availability for the first part of the season on WTU once you know your personal circumstances. If your availability changes at any point, ensure you amend WTU straight away to assist our appointing team in making the necessary amendments.

## APPOINTING MATTERS with Steve Johnson



The consensus seems to be that the 2025 season was the most difficult from an appointing perspective for many years, due to limited availability, illness or injury and on behalf of the GACO team I would like to thank colleagues for their patience and understanding as we sought to fulfil as many games with two officials as possible.

The end of the 2025 season saw the retirement of Barry Cleeve after many years' service and I am delighted to welcome Ian Purchase and Mark Forge to the "team" covering the Bristol area appointments for 2026.

For those colleagues who officiate in Indoor Leagues - covering almost 250 matches between November and February in the Cheltenham, Gloucester and BUCS competitions, it will soon be time to move back outdoors. However, given the current inclement weather, it may be hard to reconcile that the season will start in a matter of weeks - in anticipation of which, all WEPL and GCL fixtures have already been uploaded to the WTU and Play Cricket websites.

This year, the preliminary regional rounds of ECB National Competitions start on April 12<sup>th</sup>, with a second batch on April 26<sup>th</sup> and we have already loaded 10 School/College matches in April, to which will be added club pre-season games. Additionally, we will be looking to appoint to the many rearranged GCF/GYCL Cup Finals that were washed out in late August/early September 2025.

Following the changes to the WEPL T20 competition and the addition of new teams to the WEPL Women's Premier League, there are already a number of key Sundays - like 3<sup>rd</sup> May - when more than 70 officials will be needed for these competitions alone.

As a result of the above, discussions have been held with GCF to try to minimise the overlap of these competitions with the County Cup and Trophy, in which new financial penalties will be introduced for clubs/teams who enter and then fail to fulfil games.

As previously, we expect to have in excess of 125 County Age Group games from April – September, with the majority again being 2 x T20 matches.

It is expected that the Varistha T20 will run again on Tuesday nights in Cheltenham.

In 2025, GACO assisted our colleagues in Somerset covering more than 20 age group and cup games to which they were unable to appoint in the North of their region - this "cross-border" assistance will continue in 2026 as we look to give new opportunities to those colleagues seeking to broaden their experience.

I am happy to report that a number of newly-qualified and returning experienced colleagues will be joining the GACO panel for the coming season.

In 2026, the GACO appointments team will face the challenge of trying to make more than 2250 appointments across ECB Regional, WEPL & GCL, various Cup/Trophy competitions, Seniors, County Age Group, BUCS/Schools & Colleges, Disability & T20 Competitions - to give us the best chance to keep as many people as possible happy and at the risk of boring everyone with my oft repeated message – please keep your WTU availability calendar up to date on a regular basis.

## **GLOUCESTERSHIRE CRICKET FOUNDATION NEWS**

### **with Nicky Clarke**



We're now entering the period of spring when all the GCF planning comes together, and we begin delivering our courses and other pre-season events.

Numbers are steady on the umpires' courses; we are starting to look at ways to engage with new audiences and will spend the summer capturing content and spreading the word, which will hopefully coincide with a new umpires' recruitment initiative from WEPL. As the GACO committee will attest, we are working with the other counties and leagues that fall under the WEPL umbrella, trying to find the best way forward, but as with many multi-

stakeholder conversations, there are numerous different opinions and challenges to overcome.

The launch of the online courses, both umpiring and scoring, is starting to gain traction, and I hope these will act as springboards to allow us more contact time with prospective new umpires and scorers who want to progress through the respective pathways. Even if they choose to remain in a club setting, we can be assured that the additional knowledge they take back to their clubs is beneficial to all involved. Hopefully, in a few years' time, they will decide to do more.

Sue's courses have been launched, to great effect, which is a testament to the scorers' community she has been building in Gloucestershire over recent years. WEPL is backing the ACOS with both financial support to run courses and by announcing at their recent AGM that all WEPL sides must have a trained DLS manager in their club. Across Gloucestershire, Somerset, and Wiltshire, the ACOs will have made contact with 50+ scorers, many of whom have not previously engaged with the scoring pathway. WEPL will further strengthen their stance on supporting scorers, and all primary club scorers will be expected to be members of the ACO by the start of the 2027 season.

# INDOOR CRICKET with Jim Hyland

All the indoor leagues within the county have now concluded.

## **Cheltenham League**

Division One. Cheltenham were the dominant team this year losing just once in 12 matches.

Division Two. Another success for Cheltenham with their B team coming out on top in a very closely-contested division. NRR was the decider, Cheltenham B, Oakley Vipers & Dumbleton all finishing on 12 points.

Division Three. Another close one. A last-day win by Hatherley & Reddings B against 2<sup>nd</sup> placed Down Hatherley proved to be decisive.

Division Four. Charlton Kings finished top with 16 points while Asian Sports were runners-up.

## **Gloucester League**

The three division winners were Frampton-on-Severn, Newent, Whitminster.

## **County Play-off**

Frampton-on-Severn gave Cheltenham a real run for their money. Cheltenham, playing on their home ground reached 104/4, the visitors were up with the rate most of the way but fell 20 runs short.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> match, Bedminster struggled to adapt to a new venue posting only 46, Cheltenham reaching their target with time and wickets to spare to win the play-off day. They now find themselves just three wins away from a visit to Lords. Cheltenham now face Coastal Cobras CC (Wilts) in the National Indoor 6s for a place in the National quarter-finals. These matches will also be hosted in Cheltenham with the winner going to the National Finals Day at Lord's on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2026. More on this next time!

## **B.U.C.S. Southern Qualifiers**

This winter, GACO umpires had the opportunity to stand in University & College indoor cricket. Following a successful western qualifying round at Hartpury, we were asked to host the next round as well. This consisted of two groups of 4 played on consecutive days - January 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>. Teams travelled from far and wide.

**Group A** was a close-run affair. Some great indoor cricket, 3 teams winning two matches each and NRR called into action – very grateful for the app! Hertfordshire and University South Wales progressed with London School of Economics and Kent just missing out.

**Group B** was dominated by Exeter who won all three matches, with University College London as runners-up also progressing to the National Super 8s finals. Kings College and Queen Marys were the sides that missed out.

The teams provided their own scorers, while Andy Hume, Ian Coote, Peter Stratford, Prakash Timmaraju, Eric Woodmason & Jim Hyland were the GACO umpires involved.

## MARCH QUIZ

With the days growing ever longer and the 2026 cricket season this side of the horizon, here's a test of your local cricketing knowledge. Can you match the clubs with their respective 2026 leagues?

### Coalpit Heath CC

*WEPL Premier 1*

### Yeovil CC

*WEPL Premier 2 (Bristol / Somerset)*

### Downend CC

*WEPL Premier 2 (Gloucestershire / Wiltshire)*

### Rockhampton CC

*WEPL 3 (Bristol & North Somerset)*

### Keynsham CC

*WEPL 3 (Gloucestershire)*

### Chipping Campden CC

*WEPL 3 (Somerset)*

### Midsomer Norton CC

*WEPL 3 (Wiltshire)*

### Hatherley & Reddings CC

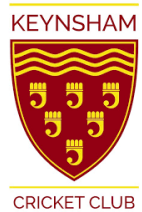
*B & D Senior Division*

### Shirehampton CC

*Gloucestershire Cricket League Division One*

### Hinton Charterhouse CC

*B & D Division One*



### Answers on Pages 20.

To find out the full list of teams competing in each of the 2026 cricket leagues, go to [www.play-cricket.com](http://www.play-cricket.com) and select the appropriate competition. Play-cricket offers a comprehensive weekly round-up of results, scorecards, league tables and statistics from around the region once the season gets underway.

## CRICKETING ODDITIES



Our 'Oddities' columnist likes low scoring matches, so here's another one from 57 years ago.

July 1969 and the West Indian tourists, having just achieved an honourable draw in an evenly-balanced test match at Lord's, headed to Londonderry in Northern Ireland to give their hosts the usual big-team v small-team thrashing. A sizeable crowd gathered at Sion Mills to witness the one-day encounter and with the tourists including some 'star' names in their line-up, it was agreed they batted first, the fear being that the game could be over much too quickly if the innings were reversed.

Unfortunately (if you were in the West Indian team, that is), things didn't quite go to plan. Joey Carew, who had made 67 and 45 in the test match and Steve Camacho (who hadn't), were warmly applauded to the wicket and courteously greeted when they, very quickly, returned. Basil Butcher and Clive Lloyd both disappeared for 2 and 1 respectively, leaving Clyde Walcott to lead a recovery, which he did of sorts, helping his team recover from 6-5 to 12-7. When No 10 Patrick Roberts succumbed without troubling the scorers to leave the tourists tottering at 12-9, the excitement clearly led to the hosts losing a little bit of concentration, allowing Shane Shillingford and Philbert Blair to more than double the score before Blair was bowled by the NI captain, Douglas Goodwin, who finished with 5-6 from 12.3 overs.



Northern Ireland passed the West Indies' total in under 9 overs for the loss of only one wicket, but with the big crowd desperate for more entertainment (and the NI Cricket Board concerned about the impact an early finish would have on beer sales), the hosts

batted on before declaring when their lead reached 100, leaving West Indies time to bat again. They did better second time around, eventually reaching 78-4 from 34 overs, with Goodwin graciously declining to bowl more than two overs, though he still returned 2-1 from 12 deliveries, giving him the remarkable figures of 14.3-9-7-7.

### West Indies

Camacho	c Dineen	b Goodwin	1
Carew	c Hughes	b O’Riordan	0
Foster	Run out		2
Butcher	c Duffy	b O’Riordan	2
Lloyd	c Waters	b Goodwin	1
Walcott	c Anderson	b O’Riordan	6
Shepherd	c Duffy	b Goodwin	0
Finlay	c Waters	b Goodwin	0
Shillingford	Not out		9
Roberts	c Colhoun	b O’Riordan	0
Blair		b Goodwin	3
Extras			1
Total (all out)			25

Fall of wickets: 1-1, 1-2, 3-3, 6-4, 6-5, 8-6, 12-7, 12-8, 12-9, 25-10.

Bowling:

O’Riordan: 13-8-18-4; Goodwin: 12.3-8-6-5.

### Northern Ireland

Waters	c Findlay	b Blair	2
Pigot	c Camancho	b Shillingford	37
Reith	lbw	b Shepherd	10
Harrison	lbw	b Shepherd	2
Anderson	c Shepherd	b Roberts	7
Dineen		b Shepherd	0
O’Riordan		c & b Carew	35
Duffy	Not out		15
Hughes	c Sub	b Carew	13
Extras			6
Total (declared)			125-8

Fall of wickets: 1-19, 2-30, 3-34, 4-51, 5-55, 6-69, 7-103, 8-125.

Bowling:

Blair: 8-4-14-1; Shillingford: 8-2-19-1; Shepherd: 13-4-20-3; Roberts: 16-4-43-1; Carew: 3-0-23-2

## GACO ONLINE SHOP



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The GACO shop, which can be accessed via [gaco.org.uk](http://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://gaco.org.uk)

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

GACO County Lead Scorer (Development), **Malcolm Doody**, falls under this month's *Officiating Matters* spotlight.



Position in GACO	County Lead Scorer – Development (CLSD)
Profession – now or previously	IT Consultant and Security Manager
For how long have you umpired/scored?	Scored for 18 years
Main cricket team played for / associated with	Chipping Sodbury CC
Role in that team (eg opening bat)	Coach and Scorer, despite never having played cricket (excluding French cricket on the beach)
Favourite ever cricketer	Beefy

What is your favourite sporting moment?	Jonny Wilkinson's 2003 World Cup-winning drop goal.
If you could learn a skill instantly, what would it be?	A foreign language
Saturday night: Go home or go out?	Go home
Name three things other than cricket that you enjoy doing.	Reading, Sudoku, Walking in the local countryside
Name three things you really don't like.	Sleet, Scammers & Shopping
What were your best & worst subjects at school?	Best: Maths/Sciences Worst: History/French
Describe your favourite meal	A Sunday Roast
Create a 3-item meal that you really wouldn't like	Tripe, overcooked vegetables and a side of Kimchi
If you were to write a book, what would it be about?	Cryptography
Three words to describe yourself.	Practical, Methodical & Curious
What is your favourite saying/quote/mantra?	Plan the dive, dive the wreck, wreck the plan!
What is your 'nightmare' scenario?	Standing up in front of people and being expected to talk.
If you were stranded on a desert island, which three things would you like to have with you?	An axe, a bottomless supply of Ale, and a solar-powered radio (that can at least receive TMS).
Greatest sportsperson ever	J P R Williams
Greatest invention ever	Fire
Greatest band ever	Jethro Tull
Greatest ever film or musical	The Lavender Hill Mob (or pretty-much any of the other Ealing comedies)
If you could meet one person in the world, who would it be and why?	Nelson Mandela, a role model on dealing with adversity and extending forgiveness
What are your hopes for the 2026 cricket season?	An improvement on the over-winter weather!

## AND FINALLY .....WHAT'S YOUR DECISION?



It's the first Saturday of the season in the B & D Senior Division and the home side has won the toss. The opening batters descend the sparkling white concrete stairs which have been lovingly painted only a fortnight before and cross the boundary rope, only for the heavens to open just as they arrive in the middle.

Both batters and fielders hurtle to the shelter of the pavilion/bar. After 45 minutes the rain ceases, the ground staff get to work and just over an hour (and a couple of pints of Poretti) later, the fielding side take to the field for a second time.

As the opening pair arrive in the middle however, the fielding captain notices that both batters are different players to those who marched out nearly two hours previously. You are standing at Striker's End when the captain informs you of the change in personnel.

What do you do?

### January's Conundrum

In a GCL 45-over match, the opening bowler fires the first ball of the game two yards down the leg side, past the startled wicketkeeper, who watches forlornly as it crosses the boundary rope with no fielder anywhere quick enough to intervene. The keeper immediately decides to stand back to the second delivery and as such, removes his helmet and places it on the ground behind him. The second ball is also fired two yards down the leg side and before the umpire can raise his arms to signal the second 'wide' of the day, the wicketkeeper inadvertently deflects the ball on to the stationary helmet. The frenzied scorers make a note in the margins of their scorebooks, stating runs, wickets & overs bowled. What do they write?

**A:** 11 runs, no wickets, 0.0 overs bowled.



### QUIZ Answers

Coalpit Heath CC: B & D Senior Division.

Yeovil CC: WEPL 3 (Somerset).

Downend CC: WEPL 2 (Bristol / Somerset).

Rockhampton CC: Gloucestershire Cricket League First Division.

Keynsham CC: WEPL 3 (Bristol & North Somerset).

Chipping Campden CC: WEPL 3 (Gloucestershire).

Midsomer Norton CC: WEPL Premier 1.

Hatherley & Reddings CC: WEPL 2 (Gloucestershire / Wiltshire).

Shirehampton CC: B & D First Division.

Hinton Charterhouse CC: WEPL 3 (Wiltshire).

## OM (March 2026) Contributors

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*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](mailto:development@gaco.org.uk) with your offering. The next edition is due out in two months' time at the beginning of May.*



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