

ASSOCIATION DES CLUBS DE CRICKET DU SUD-OUEST

Siège social : Hôtel des Associations - 47160 DAMAZAN



ACCSO UMPIRING REPORT 2017 SEASON

UMPIRE AVAILABILITY

The initial trawl for Umpires for the season resulted in 18 responses; but with 4 unavailable due to injury or other reasons, 14 different Umpires finally stood in the matches. This resulted in a full complement of Umpires for virtually all the matches in the season. My particular thanks go to those who stood in at the last minute or were prepared to move location. I was also hugely impressed by how everyone quickly responded to e-mails requesting stand-ins. Even a quick negative answer helps the Umpire Manager in revising the Umpire roster.

An Umpire course was held before the season began and this resulted in all 4 participants earning the basic qualification. I was also delighted to see that 2 of them managed to stand in competitive matches having warmed up in friendly matches.

Overall the new league programme did not seem to affect Umpire availability.

APPLICATION OF THE LAWS

There was a minor change to the ACCSO tournament regulations this season in that Umpires were able to call “beamers” above the waist and any ball above shoulder height as No-Balls. This was used a number of times by both Umpires in the matches where I stood. There seemed to be a general lack of understanding amongst players and even some Captains about this tournament regulation, a variation on the Laws which applies to all ACCSO competitive matches.

The calling of Wides continued to be contentious and was also not fully understood by players and Captains, particularly down the leg-side. The ACCSO tournament regulation states, for all types of match, that it is a Wide if the ball travels behind the “normal guard position” of the batsman on the leg-side. Hence, if a batsman makes a movement towards the off-side the Umpire has to take this into account. Umpires should explain this verbally, or with a body movement, when a batsman appears to question why a Wide has not been awarded on the leg-side.

It remains a mystery as to why so many players do not understand the LBW Law and this should be explained by Captains during training at the start of the season. Few bowlers are aware that a batsman cannot be given Out when the ball strikes the pad outside off-stump and a shot is offered. However, there seems to be a general improvement in the mainstream bowlers at the clubs where I stood. Eymet, Catus and Bordeaux are to be particularly commended for sensible appealing. To assist in training bowlers, Umpires should explain, if appropriate, why they have not given a LBW decision.

A number of Umpires requested clarification on specific points, particularly the ACCSO tournament regulations. These were answered with the help of Stephen Harrison. It is important that all Captains and Umpires read the competition regulations at the start of each season and, if they do not understand them – or the Laws on which they are based - contact the Umpire Manager or ACCSO President for clarification.

PLAYER BEHAVIOUR

There was a mixed picture in relation to player behaviour this season. In many matches behaviour was exemplary but there were serious incidents in at least 3 matches resulting in disciplinary reviews and 2 bans. Such behaviour resulted in one Umpire refusing to stand in any more matches during the season, and a second Umpire refusing to stand for a specific match. This is totally unacceptable and it falls on both Captains and Presidents to keep playing members under control.

At a lower level there were still a number of incidents where a player was given Out and refused to walk. This is also unacceptable. In one match a player refused to believe that he was LBW and was still complaining at the end of the match that he was too far forward to be given out. I had witnessed at square leg that he was struck on the pad with both legs one-third of the way back in the crease! This illustrates the problem that some players do not realise what actions/movements they have made during a dismissal. The Umpire is in the best position to see, so players should accept the decision and get on with the game.

Excessive appealing raised its head again. There is one school of thought that Umpires should accept an unusually high level of appealing from younger players. However, this is a further role of the Captain and senior players at a club. In one match with excessive appealing, a club Captain explained to the Umpires that the young players only knew Street Cricket. In contrast, at another club, the wicketkeeper immediately reprimanded a young player for appealing from the boundary. Excessive appealing is one of the areas covered by the new Laws, which are expected to be introduced next season. All players need to understand that, under these Laws, excessive appealing could result in Penalty Runs or even suspension from the field

CAPTAIN BEHAVIOUR

Captains must realise that they are the most important link between Umpires and the players **and that they should always be on the Umpire's side**. I overheard one Captain referring to 9 or 10 inept decisions by ACCSO Umpires during the season. The England v South Africa test series was of particular interest this summer due to the number of decisions overturned by the DRS system. In one England innings 3 decisions relating to edges were overturned. If world-class Umpires make such mistakes how can Captains expect our Umpires to be perfect?

It is very easy for a Captain to blame an Umpire for affecting the result of a match. The Umpire may have made a genuine mistake; but how many mistakes did the Captain make himself in handling his team, or the

players make in terms of their batting, bowling and fielding? This would be an interesting exercise to be undertaken by an impartial observer in a sample match.

The Captain's role in supporting the Umpires will be critical if the new Laws are introduced next season, which effectively give Umpires a yellow/red card system.

FAIR PLAY AWARD

The completion of the FPA form is now routine for Umpires and works well.

FINANCE

Four Umpires made no claims, 3 Umpires made cash claims, at a cost of €663.64, and 7 Umpires made tax-beneficial donations of €4153.20. Training and Umpire materials cost €493.18. Hence, total umpiring costs were €5400.02, but with the offset of €4153.20 for donations, the net cost to ACCSO was €1156.82.

UMPIRE AWARDS

There have been a number of awards given to ACCSO Umpires this season by AFCAM (Association Française du Corps Arbitral Multisports. Adrian Evett won a regional award for Nouvelle Aquitaine, and Allison Rocher received a national-level "Espoir" award. Bearing in mind that AFCAM covers all sports, where cricket must be in a real minority, both are to be congratulated on their achievements.

Richard Thompson has decided to retire from umpiring and I am aware that the Midi club intended to give him an appropriate send-off. Richard contributed much at Regional and at National level during his career and is thanked for everything. He was a strong advocate of giving Umpires more "teeth" and it is a pity to see him leaving just as the new Laws are on the horizon.

HIGHLIGHT OF THE SEASON

I had one personal highlight of the season. Eymet facilitated a training match between Bergerac Afghans and Perigueux Afghans, from 2 "Foyers" which had been set up following the collapse of The Jungle in Calais. All the players had only previously played Street Cricket. At the end of the match all the players spontaneously applauded the Umpires as we left the field, perhaps because they realised how important it was to have an official to control a match. It is a pity that this has not dawned on some players in South-West France!

FINAL THANKS

I have just started a part-time MA in the UK so I have decided to step down from all administrative roles with both club and region for the next 2 years in order to concentrate on academia. My final thanks go to all those who have supported me as Umpire Manager over the last 2 years.

Glyn Taylor

18 October 2017.