



# Development Group

## @ The London Cup 2011

On the 16<sup>th</sup> July, the KHUA ran a development group to the London Cup.

Members attending were from across all panels from both sections. This day was devised not only to help development in umpires but also to forge closer links within the association. I thoroughly enjoyed the day & it was great too see so many smiling faces with the objective to learn & enjoy themselves.

The group attendees were: Daran Cass, Debbie Garner, Oliver Jones, Nick Crane, Vicky Winchester, Peter Barker, Bob Jordan & Jason Davies.

Below is a report of the day written by Oliver Jones & comments from the other attendees.

Daran Cass

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### Structure of the day

Arriving at Dukes Meadow, Chiswick, the group were greeted by some typically British summer weather but this didn't dampen the spirits as everyone was looking forward to a great day out under the guidance of Daran Cass and Debbie Garner. The mood was heightened yet further as Daran introduced a special guest, on exchange from Hampshire, Mark 'Sparky' Everard.

'The Chairman' greeted the group, with one eye on the hog roast queue, and split us into two groups, one to be coached by Daran and Debbie respectively. Topics were highlighted for the groups to observe in the two matches providing a structure for post-match discussion.

### Topics for discussion

#### Match 1 – England v Belgium:

The first match saw England take on Belgium in a scrap for the wooden spoon with KHUA's focus being on the umpires' positioning. With quality lacking from the first whistle, it was clear to see that positioning would be important for both umpires and the frantic pace of the two teams coupled to a large number of turnovers was matched with incident at both ends.

While both umpires found themselves caught out of position on a couple of occasions, due mainly to the number of turnovers and occasionally England's use of the aerial ball, I noted how the umpires tried to keep no more than a quarter of the pitch from the play, especially when recovering, as play transferred from their end to the other. This allowed the umpires to sell decisions with greater authority and allowed them to keep their management of the game fairly low key.

A win for England couldn't hide the number of errors from both sides however in our review of the umpires we noted that umpire Kim had appeared very pre-occupied and this transposed into his performance and general demeanour throughout the match – although a lack of incident meant that no further issues came from this.

#### Match 2 – New Zealand v S. Korea :

For the 'Final,' KHUA's merry band whistlers were asked to look at the umpires' pro-activity in management and how this added/detracted from the flow of the game. Having watched the previous day's matches as well, it was obvious that the two most exciting teams were in the final and the game did not disappoint. Korea's creativity was rewarded with some excellent, free-flowing hockey and the umpires' ability to reward good skill with advantages produced a couple of excellent goals.

From my perspective, the umpires' ability to read play and to some extent 'put faith' in a player's skill allowed players the opportunity to exploit positions which appeared hopeless. It was noted however that the level could be considered to be somewhat above that of the Kent/Sussex regional league and one would have to be very brave to play some of the advantages seen! The umpires' use of a quick whistle to 'manufacture' space for the attacker was also something that it was good to see in practice and something that can add to the flow of the game.

### **The Experience**

The day was an excellent opportunity not only to watch high level competitive hockey and the umpires who we aspire to be, but also to catch up with colleagues from both the men's and women's sides of KHUA and it was interesting to see and hear differing views on the styles and techniques of the umpires on show.

I believe that the day was a great success thanks to Daran and Debbie's ability to stimulate thought and concepts amongst the group and I hope KHUA will provide more opportunities for its umpires to develop and further their hockey experience in the future.

Oliver Jones

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### **Views from the other attendees!**

Debbie Garner: "It was a great day with a bunch of KHUA members from a variety of panels who soaked up the experience (oh and the rain!!). All of them could not believe their luck that they had been selected, tickets were paid for and ordered. All they had to do was turn up and enjoy! And I believe they did. They were receptive and joined in with the discussions pitch side. My first group were probably more engaged in talking through man management but then Kim gave them lots of material!!"

Peter Barker: The areas we concentrated on were very appropriate and I felt I learnt several key points from the discussions - both during the game as we sat in our groups (when events are fresh in our minds which I found most valuable) and afterwards all together. Especially stuff about areas of control. Seems simple and 'basic' but agreement before can lead to avoidance of conflict issues, double whistling etc. Overall a great experience. I thoroughly enjoyed the day and thanks for organising. As well as learning a few new things and enforcing others, it was great to mix with umpires of varying levels and from both men's & ladies hockey. The 'social' bit was also valuable for KHUA. The concept was a great one and I hope could be repeated.

Vicky Winchester: The areas we concentrated on were proactive management and anticipation/reading the game. These are two very important things that we all need to work on. As I am still playing (badly I know) the umpiring standards I see really lack in these areas. It is not knowing the rules (this obviously helps!! and isn't always true!!!) but how to adapt and "manage" each individual game to my mind they are not all the same. I find a lot of umpires who see the whistle as a symbol of authority and use it as such with no interaction with the players at all! Ggrrrrr. To me personally the tips and tricks of the trade that you can learn from watching and discussing with senior (in experience) colleagues is invaluable.

There's so much more to umpiring than knowing the rules! - I had been fortunate enough to be involved with a similar group before and it is surprising what a difference "how you do it" makes. The two games showed us very different player reactions to the different umpiring styles.

Overall experience, I think this type of coaching would be invaluable for everyone. The opportunity to speak to other umpires, in relation to the game play, the rules and the umpiring is really motivating.

**If would like to take this opportunity to thank all the attendees & Debbie Garner for all their efforts & willingness!! If you would like to attend future groups, please contact Peter Worrall or Debbie Garner.**

Daran Cass