

2016 VISCUS Report on Umpiring System

Overall the umpiring system seems to have worked reasonably well in 2016. Experienced umpires continue to make a major contribution and are well appreciated by the teams. Newer umpires seem to have benefitted from a year's experience and many are getting good comments from captains.

Only one match was 'self-umpired'. Very few were solo umpired with a self-umpire or volunteer square-leg being self-umpired, none resulted in a complaint and in most cases the teams were very understanding and complimentary. Given that everyone seems to be really trying to make this system work, I felt it unnecessary to press the VDCA to levy fines on the odd occasion that only one umpire was available.

However, there have been two administrative issues that are both irritating and a concern.

First, a number of umpires did not register and therefore were not technically eligible to umpire and are not insured. Darren Buhr has worked diligently to follow up on this and has deducted registration fees from umpiring fees when registration fees had not been paid. But where umpires do not fill out the registration forms at the start of each season, it causes a lot of wasted effort and incurs some risks.

Second, the number of matches where reports were not sent to VISCUS increased this year. Some were obtained, after much effort, weeks, even months after the match and there are about seven still missing. Making sure that Johnny's, Jim's and Doug's email addresses are on the forms might help. But the lack of a match report not only means those umpires don't get paid and a lot of time and effort is wasted, it also undermines our

ability to track umpiring issues and the need to clarify rules, or set up specific training sessions to meet identified issues.

It would be helpful for club captains to really reinforce the need for umpire registration and filing match reports with VISCUS with every umpire in their clubs at the start of each season.

As noted, match reports are a vehicle whereby both captains and umpires can identify issues. Every match report received was examined to produce the following compilation of issues identified this season.

A. Umpiring performance

- a. There were three complaints about the overall performance of an umpire. This is about the same as last year. Experience and a bit of guidance seemed to have addressed last year's issues and hopefully will do the same for this year's.
- b. There were complaints about specific decisions:
 - i. Wide calling (3)
 - ii. Lbw decisions (1)
 - iii. Missed stumpings (2)
- c. Other umpiring issues were:
 - i. Umpires should not wear white (1)
 - ii. Umpires need to count bowlers overs correctly or accept advice of scorer (1)
 - iii. Umpires need to firmly control disputes that break out between teams (1)
 - iv. Square leg umpires should not get involved in lbw decisions (1)
 - v. Umpires should not be on cell phones during a match (1)
 - vi. Umpires should not be impolite (1)

- vii. Umpires should be aware of and enforce the rule about when a late-comer can participate (bat/bowl) (1)

B. Player behaviour

- a. Excessive appealing was complained about by captains (3) and umpires (2) with captains concerned that this influenced decisions. Another captain complimented the umpires for standing up to such appealing 'pressure'.
- b. Arguing over decisions and trying to influence decisions in this way was complained about by both a captain and an umpire.
- c. There were individual complaints about bowlers
 - i. Having a suspect action
 - ii. Using spikes
 - iii. Bowling too fast at an under-age player

C. Rule Interpretation – requests for rule clarification, interpretation or guidance to umpires arose in connection with:

- i. Balls hitting the edge of the mat
- ii. Who calls bouncers/beamers no balls and is there a need for consultation with square leg?
- iii. How strictly to apply participation rules when both sides are late
- iv. The eligibility of a player who is not registered but provides the umpire with a registration form and fee just before the match
- v. The role of umpires in applying the 'spirit of the game' law when:
 - 1. Players argue with umpires or the other team
 - 2. Arguments escalate to vigorous team disputes

3. Very young players face adults
4. There is excessive 'celebration'

D. Other issues raised included:

- a. Readiness of the venue. Complaints were made about the inadequacy of pitch marking at Windsor Park (2) and Beacon Hill (1), and the delay of a game at Beacon Hill while keys to the pavilion were located (1).
- b. Teams not providing sufficient scorebooks (2)
- c. Home games being scheduled when the home ground was not available (1)
- d. Dealing with abusive spectators (1)

Some of these issues were dealt with by VISCUS or the VDCA when they arose. Others may need further discussion and guidance from VISCUS or the VDCA.

Respectfully submitted

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