

# COMMUNITY UMPIRE PROGRAMME - PILOT



## Introduction

All cricket in New Zealand is played with at least two umpires in the middle. Unfortunately, there are only about 300 registered official active club umpires in New Zealand, so majority of club cricket is umpired by player umpires.

Over time, there has been a want and need to support those grades of club cricket that do not get officially appointed umpires every game and rely on the abilities of players who do not necessarily have a knowledge of the Laws of Cricket but are expected to make educated decisions. This lack of knowledge could then lead to possible poor player behaviour, the Spirit of Cricket is tested and the overall playing experience is soured.

New Zealand Cricket & Christchurch Metro Cricket Association's **Community Umpire Programme** was piloted during the 2023-24 season, as an opportunity to help support the players who have to umpire their own matches on the weekend. The emphasis of this programme is to educate, observe and support player umpires.

## How was this achieved?

- Most importantly, the programme was endorsed by Christchurch Metro Cricket Association and it's affiliated clubs.
- Each team were encourage to have a minimum of 2 players to attend a pre-season Community Umpire's Course.
- The incentive for attending was 1 competition point for each team.
- Course was initially delivered by NZC with support from the local Umpire's Association.
- The course was delivered at a number of local clubrooms.
- During the season, we committed to doing a number of boundary observations, to assist the development of the umpires and allow for feedback.
- Hosted an end-of-season get together to review and reflect on the programme.

*The intended outcomes of this programme are the following:*

1. Confident player umpires.
2. Minimise player behaviour issues.
3. Improved cricketing experience.
4. Indirect recruitment tool.

## Programme statistics?

### Course Attendance:

Tues 19 Sept (6-8pm) - Merivale Papanui Cricket Club - **33 attendees.**

Weds 20 Sept (6-8pm) - East Shirley Cricket Club - **25 attendees.**

Weds 27 Sept (6-8pm) - Sydenham Cricket Club \*(Women/Girls Only)\* - **25 attendees.**

Tues 3 Oct (6-8pm) - Old Boys Collegians Cricket Club - **23 attendees.**

Weds 4 Oct (6-8pm) - Sydenham Cricket Club - **55 attendees.**

Tues 10 Oct (6-8pm) - Burnside West University Cricket Club \*(Closed Session)\* - **8 attendees.**

# 169

total attendees.

# 18

clubs represented.

# 3

schools represented.

# 133/36

male/female split.

# Attendance



In total, 200 players registered via a Microsoft online form and eventually 169 attended or of the five courses offered. The breakdown was as follows:

- **140** – Club players from Championship to Social 8's
- **23** – Youth players from Year 9 to First XI
- **6** – Premiership players
- **18 Clubs** and **3 Schools** were represented
- **36** – Females
- **133** – Males

## Laws covered

- Spirit of Cricket
- No Ball
- Wide Ball
- LBW practical
- Teamwork & positioning
- Q & A



## Code of Conducts (2020-24)

### 2020/2021 – 13 Code of Conduct hearings

- Dissent to umpire, Willful damage to fixture, Bringing the game into disrepute, Bringing into disrepute – physical assault, Unacceptable behaviour – dishonesty/racism.

### 2021/2022 – 7 Code of Conduct hearings

- Dissent to umpire, Game into disrepute, Fighting; game into disrepute.

### 2022/2023 – 3 Code of Conduct hearings

- Dissent to Umpire, Racial abuse.

### 2023/2024 – 5 Code of Conduct hearings

- Game into disrepute, Gear abuse, Dissent, Equipment Abuse.



# Programme Feedback



*"Thanks for the session last night. Really got some useful information that I will relay back to the lads. There were a few rules that I didn't know the ruling on and last night gave me the clarification. I think as premier cricketers we can sometimes believe that we know all the rules, which you will know isn't that case! Just thought it could be beneficial for players that do actually have umpires to also get the clarification on the rules/laws. Thanks again, I'm sure people will benefit from these sessions."*

## **- East Shirley Div 1 Player**

*"Thank you for the amazing umpire programme last Wednesday at the Sydenham club. Me and my mates found it very helpful and we shall take the steps to get the knowledge passed on to others in our team. I think it would be really great if each and every player in every club gets a chance to attend your session but I'm not sure how feasible it is. That will definitely help everyone and also understand the spirit of the game a bit more and make the games a bit more enjoyable. It's a great initiative and your mode of delivery was superb and kept everyone very much interested throughout the session."*

## **- Sydenham Div 6 Player**

*"Thank you for running the umpiring course, it was a great refresher. I think the biggest takeaway for me was setting up properly behind the stumps. In my grade it's a lot less serious than the higher grades, but I think this is often overlooked. I realised that I've been standing far too close to the stumps to get a good view of the front foot and to keep the strikers end stumps properly in line with the bowlers end stumps. I'm also really looking forward to the spirit of cricket rating that metro cricket has setup. There are many teams in our grade that are an absolute joy to play against and that can often go overlooked."*

## **- Parklands T20 Player**

*"I thought the umpiring programme was excellent. It provided a forum for people from across the levels of club cricket to interact and appreciate each other. I think it definitely helped build confidence in peoples umpiring skills. Personally, I found it a good reminder of some of the slightly more niche rulings that you don't come across every weekend (or even every season). I think also having access to two high quality umpires in yourself and Dave Henderson was fantastic. My only thoughts around improvements for next season would be to try and get more people along. I think particularly for morning grade cricketers it should be near enough compulsory to complete one of these programmes."*

## **- St Albans Premier Player.**

*"I can't speak highly enough of the benefits I gained from the programme. It truly transformed my umpiring skills and confidence on the field. The intensive training sessions and feedback from experienced umpires helped me understand the game better and make more accurate decisions. Compare this with all the seasons that I played before this is the best with umpiring."*

*The programme also had a direct impact on my umpiring abilities. I felt more in control of the game and was able to handle difficult situations with ease. My rule knowledge improved significantly, which boosted my confidence in making quick and fair decisions. I had a newfound appreciation for the game's intricacies and the role of umpires in ensuring fair play. It was rewarding to contribute to the game in a meaningful way and be part of the action on the field."*

*The experience with the programme has definitely been a catalyst for me to pursue umpiring after playing. The knowledge and skills I've gained have inspired me to take the next step and become an official umpire. However, my preference lies in playing the magnificent game rather than umpiring now."*

*It was motivating to learn from others and share experiences, creating a supportive environment for growth. The camaraderie among participants and the mentorship from experienced umpires were the elements of the programme I enjoyed the most. For next season, I would love to see more opportunities for practical experience, such as umpiring at different levels of play, Quiz nights, umpiring camps, etc."*

## **- Halswell Div 3 Player**