



Cricket officials are an integral part of the game of cricket at all levels, and therefore good umpiring and scoring is essential to raise the standard of play, which in turn helps to increase the enjoyment for both players and spectators alike.

The recruitment and retention of cricket officials is a long running and difficult problem, however, Berkshire Cricket Officials Association (BCOA) is aware of the importance to improve this, and is very committed and successfully working hard to increase the number of active qualified officials. BCOA has for many years been leading the way in developing innovative schemes for the Support, Training and Development of its officials, many of which have been adopted by the ECB.

BCOA also recently pioneered a successful “Meet the Team” day, inviting local Clubs, Leagues and Individuals to come along and find out about the courses on offer in Berkshire during 2012. Two identical sessions were held, one in the morning and one in the afternoon at each end of the county, creating a slight logistical problem for the Training and Development teams, but well worth doing as each session produced a good attendance and a lively audience.

Attendees were interested to learn about the Course Content and Assessment and also about the various Training and Support schemes on offer. The ECB Pathway for officials also formed part of this, and it was explained that progression can be made at whatever pace is preferred and to whatever level is aspired to. By the end of the day many of the myths that had seemed to inhibit volunteers to come forward to act as officials seemed to be dispelled.

It was also interesting to see that there is a significant increase in the number of females wishing to start on the “Pathway”, which may be due to the success of our National Women’s team.

The eventual success of the day will be measured by the number of officials taking up the challenge and attending the various training and support sessions, but so far this looks extremely encouraging with one of the scheduled courses being close to fully booked already.

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