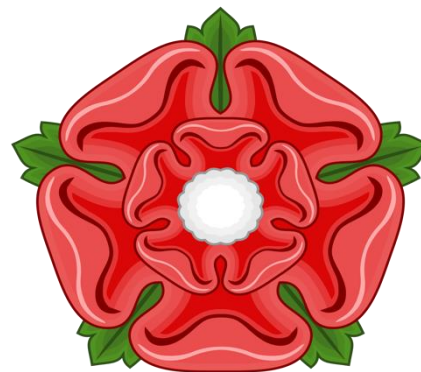


Lancashire Association of Cricket Officials

October 2021



Well, we made it!

2021 proved to be a challenging season for all our leagues but as you will read in this Newsletter, we managed to complete the season in all our major leagues with limited disruption caused by the pandemic. Huge congratulations to all the volunteers at both the league level and in individual clubs for managing to get the season completed.

On the officiating front again a superb effort by all, under at times difficult conditions, ensured that cricket could be played. Whilst not all games had two scorers, or even two umpires, without the efforts made by our members, cricket would not have been possible. Despite all these efforts, the 2021 season highlighted the shortage we have of suitably qualified officials. A significant number of games across leagues, where we would hope to have two umpires, had to manage with one. The game as a whole has to (and is starting I believe) to face up to this problem but it won't be solved overnight. LACO stand willing and able to train as many volunteers as the game can produce but our autumn/winter training programme currently is under-subscribed. Face to face and online courses are available with some details on the Training page of our website lancashireaco.wordpress.com and more to be added. If you know of anyone who wants to train to become an umpire or scorer, please refer them to our website.

In this month's Newsletter:

**Round ups from the major leagues
in Lancashire**



**Hillal Namajee writes about
umpiring in the Lancashire KO
final at Old Trafford**

**Details of cricket talks in
Southport & Liverpool**

**Remember that we are happy to
take contributions on any cricket
related topic, not just officiating –
deadline for the Christmas edition
is December 10th**



For our existing and experienced members, I am pleased to announce that we will run two Stage 3 courses this year at Emirates Old Trafford. We are aware of the pent-up demand for this course but can only manage a maximum of 24 candidates per year. This is partly to do with the course itself, but the number is mainly limited by our ability to accredit umpires in the following season. We expect all candidates for this course to become accredited and this process involves observations by our dedicated but limited team of senior Observers. Preference will be given to those who had booked on the cancelled March 2020 course plus another 8 who will be identified by each league as already standing or about to stand at Premier League level. We hope to run another two courses in 2022/23 and hopefully this will allow us to 'catch up' on the demand. If you are waiting for a Stage 3 course and don't get one this year, we hope you understand. **Rob Hales, Chairman LACO**

Round-up from the Leagues (thank you to all our contributors)

Merseyside Cricket Umpires Association (MCUA) Liverpool and District Cricket Competition (LDCC)

<https://www.umpapps.org/>

MCUA is an independent association providing umpires for the Liverpool and District Cricket Competition (LDCC). Whilst the MCUA is an 'umpires association' they welcome the involvement of scorers and meetings are open for them to attend.

The Association worked closely with the LDCC in 2020 and into 2021 to enable competitive cricket to be played within the restrictions necessarily brought about by Covid. During the summer, a few games had to be postponed because of players isolating but clubs were keen to rearrange where possible. All cup cricket throughout the league was played in a T20 format but it is expected that things will return to normal in 2022.

The Association is short of umpires despite having a number of new recruits in 2020 and 2021. These new recruits have not made up for the loss of umpires through Covid, retirement and

moving away. It is also noticeable that most umpires are not available every week of the season which is, I suspect, a growing trend in most leagues.

During the 2021 season, 16% of games had one umpire including a number of 1st Division games. However, there were a number of positives. All the new umpires, who have gone through the ACO online Stage 1 and Stage 2 courses, performed well and MCUA received positive feedback from Captains.

The Association introduced a new Captains Reporting process using Microsoft Forms. This made it easier for Captains to submit their report using a mobile, table or PC. 632 reports were received during the season on 1,154 umpires. Overall, the Captains reported that they found 86% (992) of umpires were very good or good. A further 11.5% (133) were reported as being average and only 2.5% (29) below average.

Face to face umpire meetings will recommence during the winter beginning with the End of Season meeting in October. As always, umpire training and development will be on the table.

The strength of the women and girls' game on Merseyside is recognised across the County. To support this development, the LDCC worked with the LACO to get a number of women and girls qualified to umpire. During the summer, these newly qualified umpires stood in the various women and girls matches. MCUA are hoping to attract some of these newly qualified umpires to stand in the League in coming seasons.

MCUA are continuing to work LDCC to see how the umpire addressed. Nothing is off the

By the way, the various LDCC Premier Division - Northern CC Division -Newton-le-Willows CC Division - Caldý CC. Ormskirk were Lancashire KO.



closely with the shortage can be table!

Champions were (pictured), First and Second victorious in the

Ribblesdale League

Despite initially thinking that the start of the season being likely to be delayed for at least a couple of weeks, due to the Covid pandemic, we actually started on time in April.

Although at times the weather has been far from ideal, over the season we have certainly had worse weather overall in several recent seasons.

The Thatcher's Cider Senior League was dominated for the first half by Settle and Feniscowles and these two teams met twice in the middle of the season when they had both reached that point unbeaten. Settle won both matches and continued that run to end the season unbeaten and with a magnificent points total of 266 points.

Read who started slowly took the Runners Up spot and the fight for the remaining Lancashire Knockout Cup places went down to the last ball of the last match, with Ribblesdale Wanderers securing a tie that enabled them to join the top two and Feniscowles in the draw.

The Green Thumb Ramsbottom Cup Final saw Settle take on a Cherry Tree side that had twice snatched victory from the jaws of defeat in qualifying for the Final. Settle proved too strong on the day and completed a League and Cup Double.

The Green Thumb 20/20 competition saw Barnoldswick, Earby, Ribblesdale Wanderers and Settle reach Finals Day which was held at Barnoldswick CC. Ribblesdale beat Earby in the 1st semi-final and in the 2nd semi-final Settle overturn the result in the Group Match to beat Barnoldswick.



In a tense Final in the gathering gloom, the result went down to the very last ball, with Ribblesdale (above) securing a victory that denied Settle the "treble" to claim the trophy.

In the Lancashire Knockout Cup both Read and Settle made progress, with Read being beaten by the eventual winners Ormskirk. Settle reached the Quarter Finals and due to weather preventing any play went out 3-2 on a bowl out to Burnley who eventually lost in the Final at Old Trafford.

The Inter League 20/20 competition which we as a League were due to host was not played due to Covid issues in the North West and it is hoped that this will take place in 2022.

In Division One, Settle 2nds dominated the season with winning the title with Burnley Belvedere runners-up. In Division 2 Ribblesdale Wanderers 2nd XI pipped Barnoldswick 2nds to the title on the last day of the season.

North West ACO (NWACO)

Serving the Northern Premier Cricket League (NPCL) and Moore & Smalley Palace Shield (PS)

NWACO provides umpires to the NPCL & PS. Together these two organisations cover nine divisions of competitive Saturday Cricket as well as the usual Cup competitions and T20s. NWACO provides umpires to the top 4 divisions of this structure with the remainder covered by 'club umpires' who together with Scorers may also be members of NWACO. NWACO also has representation on the Executive and Management Committee of both leagues.

Prior to the 2021 season both leagues establish COVID Protocols which detailed what would happen should the pandemic impact the season. The protocol was called into action on a number of occasions, particularly around mid-July and proved invaluable such that all games in all competitions were eventually played and worthy winners emerged.

In the NPCL the league winners were Blackpool CC. At the bottom of the table there was a



very tight finish with three teams in the frame for the 2nd relegation spot on the final day. In the end Morecambe CC will join Fleetwood CC in the PS in 2022.

In the PS Penrith CC were Champions and make an immediate return to the NPCL from where they were relegated in 2019. They will be joined by Vernon Carus CC who join Longridge CC, Fulwood and Broughton CC and

Garstang CC as ex PS clubs who have been promoted since the 'arrangement between NPCL and PS was put in place in 2016.

The PS will also welcome Carnforth CC from the Westmoreland League into its first Division in 2022 under a new arrangement which allows the Champions of that league to join the PS if they are Lancashire based and wish to do so.

NWACO were able to appoint two umpires to every game during 2021 helped by a team dropping out of Div. 1 just prior to the season having the effect of reducing the requirement for umpires from 48 to 46 per week, and an arrangement with the Westmoreland League where we share surplus umpires between the leagues. We were also able to supply umpires to some clubs in the lower divisions in the first half of the season.

Like all leagues, numbers were particularly tight in the second half of the season with holidays, COVID isolation and general unavailability becoming more of a factor.

We welcomed a number of new umpires in 2021 all of whom performed admirably. All our umpires are marked by Captains after every game using the standard ECB marking system, the average mark for the whole panel being 89% a very satisfactory position. However we

will not rest on our laurels and our autumn/winter CPD programme began last Monday and will continue on the 2nd Monday of every month at BAC Preston CC starting at 7.30pm. Everyone is welcome you don't need to be a member.

Our thoughts now turn to the 2022 season; clearly, we have shortage of umpires, like all other leagues, and we are working with all our clubs and leagues to encourage people to take the ECB ACO courses which are advertised by LACO on their website and via social media. The shortage of umpires is the game's problem not the ACOs but we can certainly help to address it.

Bolton Cricket League 2021 season

This season we tried something new which turned out to be very successful with the clubs. Teams played each other once and then split into two divisions. Both divisional results came down to the last match of the season thus keeping the interest going. Our premier division was won by Horwich with Westhoughton a close second and the Association was won by Blackrod CC . Darcy Lever won the second team premiership competition and Atherton, the second team Association. Our prestige cup competition, the Hamer Cup was well staged by Farnworth and we witnessed a great tussle between Westhoughton and Horwich with Westhoughton coming out the winners. The Birtwistle cup competition for second teams was won by Darcy Lever. Two successful T 20 competitions were held during the season with Horwich and Tonge the winners.

We were very lucky in only losing a couple of matches to Covid and were able to supply two umpires to all matches on all bar two occasions thanks to the help of a group of casual umpires. It's nice to see some of these registering for the upcoming umpire's courses.



LACO Scorers' Officer, Karen Knott presents the scorers' distinction award to new scorer, Ayesha Khan.

Greater Manchester Cricket League (GMCL)

With the top of only one division decided prior to the last weekend and relegation battles still to be concluded, it was another exciting end to the season in GMCL.

As with all leagues some matches were lost to Covid but this thankfully was kept to a minimum and all postponed matches in Premier and Premier 2 were played later in the season, so no matches were lost in the top divisions. Those matches lost in lower divisions were decided by a new intervention of average points rather than simply recording matches as abandoned where one or both of the teams had Covid issues

The Premier division was won by Prestwich with Denton St Lawrence losing out by a couple of points. Prestwich (pictured celebrating the moment) having already won the Derek Kay Cup



were double winners and deservedly so.

Premier 2 was won by Denton West who return to the Premier Division after a couple of years absence. They will be joined by Edgworth and Walshaw. Going in the opposite direction are Flixton, Glodwick and Greenfield.

After a disappointing 2020, the three clubs relegated from the Premier division to Premier 2 suffered the same fate and all three clubs were relegated for a second successive season, Monton, Royton and Woodhouses will play in the Championship in 2022. In the Championship, newcomers to the league Heaton were champions and Shaw and Brooksbottom promoted to Premier 2

The surprise package in division 2A was Roe Green 2nd XI who whilst competing in a division including 8 1st XI's they succeeded in winning the division, a fabulous achievement.

The pressure to field umpires for every 1st XI game has become an art form for the Saturday Appointments Officer Ian Herbert. The league has to field a minimum of 66 umpires each Saturday and with the support of umpires from other Leagues this was achieved most weekends. One point worthy of note is the success of the Club Umpire system which operates at 2nd XI level in GMCL. Most 2nd XI matches have two Club Umpires officiating and more than 10 of the Club Umpires have been promoted to the GMCL Saturday Panel since 2019 which is a positive pathway for new umpires to follow. Some of those umpires have completed U2A accreditation in 2021.

If anything good is to be noted from the Covid playing regulations, it is that umpires have not had to carry bowler's caps and sweaters. I think we'd all agree sweaters we can tolerate but sweaty caps? Let's hope we don't have to handle those items in the future!!

Lancashire Cricket League

The Lancashire League enjoyed one of the most exciting finishes for some years with all of the top three teams going into the last round of games with a chance of winning the championship and for the first time in living memory there was a chance of a play off being needed to separate the sides. Darwen put the pressure on the other two clubs with an early win at Colne, dismissing the home side for 78 thanks to a return of 6 for 30 from the League top wicket taker David Bowden who then opened the batting and was out first ball! Another quick wicket fell to leave Darwen at 10 for 2 but John Cordingley and their substitute professional Geeth Kumara then put together a partnership to earn an 8 wicket victory and



put Darwen top for the time being.

At Turf Moor, Burnley, Norden were the visitors, top v second at the start of the day. Burnley won the toss, batted and made 206 for 5 from their 50 overs thanks mainly to a trademark 86 not out from

professional Ockert Erasmus and 59 for wicket keeper Chris Burton. In reply Norden fell to 73 for 4 and despite Harvey Fitton top scoring with 46 they came up short making 150. Burnley therefore retained the Championship they had won in 2019, pre pandemic.

At the other end of the table Colne and Crompton suffered relegation into the second division, swapping places with Haslingden and new entrants Greenmount.

The Worsley Cup saw a massive crowd at Chatburn Road where Clitheroe hosted Lowerhouse with the hosts inviting the visitors to bat first. Lowerhouse captain Ben Heap made 67, Jonny Whitehead 44 and substitute professional Ruhan Pretorius was undefeated on 79. Man of the match Francois Haasbroek then got to work with the ball and a return of 6 for 35 contributed greatly to restricting Clitheroe to 187 all with Thomas Lord top scoring with 40 from 43 balls.

The T20 competition finals day at Crompton actually got played on the scheduled date, all three previous events had ended up being postponed. Clitheroe saw off Norden in the first semi final by 15 runs (179/7 vs 164/7) with 25 fours and 15 sixes in the match. Hosts Crompton made 144 all out against Darwen who chased the totals down within 18 overs, again more big hitting with 30 fours and nine sixes. In the final Darwen batted first and substitute professional Atharwa Taide took control with a stunning century 101 from 58 balls, 10 fours and 5 sixes and the innings was rounded off with 46 from 16 balls by Rob Cobley who hit 6 sixes. Clitheroe's substitute Richard Levi then looked to emulate his opposite number with 80 in 43 balls before he fell to a catch by Taide and despite a fighting 46 from Sam Mulligan Darwen became winners by 24 runs.

It has been a difficult season for our appointments Secretary Barry Evans with injuries, retirements and Covid related issues but he has, as ever, done a sterling job. Clubs have been asked for suggestions on how we can increase panel numbers, there has been a limited response but they are fully aware that it is their problem and unless we address the issue it will not go away.

Disciplinary matters have been dealt with, on the whole, by clubs in a timely manner and therefore there was only one full League Disciplinary Panel called during the season.

Westmorland League

Carnforth won the Westmorland League for the third time running, with Heysham in second place in what was a successful season for the league, with Carnforth reaching the Meyler Cup Final and Shireshead the semi-final, both losing to Penrith. Shireshead won the T20 beating Trimpell in the final (Andy Bargh and Simon Willacy who officiated are pictured at Cartmel). Silverdale were relegated and will be replaced in Division 1 by Kirkby Lonsdale who did the league and cup double. Carnforth move into the Palace Shield with Kendal 2nds moving the other way.

COVID played a part with around half a dozen games cancelled, with a spike occurring shortly after the European Championship final. Unlike other leagues a decision was taken to treat the games as draws, rather than seek to replay them. Players were keen to drop the sanitisation breaks as soon as they could.



In the Westmorland League for around a decade there had been very few new umpires. This started to change in 2019 and it was pleasing to see in 2021 that around half of those standing had first taken up the coat over the past three years. A number had attended ECB ACO courses in January 2020, but others had only taken online courses and despite this, supported by more experienced colleagues, they received positive feedback from players. Umpire availability was more of a challenge for the Appointments Secretary in the second half of the season as umpires were advised to isolate and some took advantage of the opportunity for a foreign holiday. However, there were only couple of occasions when an umpire had to stand at both ends in Division 2 games. Further courses will be run in January 2022 to build on the recruitment success of the last couple of years.

Lancashire Knockout Cup Final

I have been requested to share an account of the day. On Sunday 22nd August 2021, it was my honour to umpire the Lancashire Knock Out Final at Old Trafford.

I was invited to officiate in this fixture via a phone call from Kevin Wilson who manages the Appointments of umpires to the LKO on behalf of the LACO Appointments Committee . I had just arrived home from work and my initial reaction was to ask Kevin if it was LKO final he was referring to. Kevin, started again and explained that I was shortlisted and required confirmation on my availability for the 22nd August. I quickly responded without any hesitation with a "Yes" without checking my diary. Fortunately, it was a date which I was available. Kevin explained that all the information would be cascaded via email and the game would be staged at Emirates Old Trafford. I was very pleased with the invite, and saw it as an opportunity to further develop myself. I quickly shared the amazing news with my father and a few close friends who were very happy for my achievement.



Hilall and colleague, Adrian Darlington, discuss standing in the final

The night before the game, I ran through my regs for the tenth time.....! As part of my preparation, I had a very early night. After a good night's rest, I made way to Manchester and arrived bright and early. The weather was one concern throughout the week as it was forecasted for rain. However, by early morning I noticed that the forecast had slightly changed with sunny spells and surprisingly no rain around Manchester. This was fantastic news for both Umpires as it allowed both to focus on the game rather than the weather.

We made our way inside the ground, and were welcomed warmly by a number of officials, who directed us towards the Players & Media Centre. We met the Lancashire scorer, who explained the intricacies of the scoreboard to us, and told that Duckworth Lewis 'would run in the background throughout' (there was very little chance of rain interruption). We were also shown around the Media Centre.

Then we were taken to the Umpires changing room within the Players & Media Centre which looked over the playing area. It was the perfect view. Once we were changed, we went out to walk the boundary and do all the normal pre-match duties. Naturally, everything was pristine and in order. Returning to the pavilion, we had our photographs with the two teams, Ormskirk and Burnley.

Ormskirk, from West Lancashire represented the Liverpool & District Cricket Competition. Burnley, from the Lancashire League. Both teams were having a successful season.

Then it was time for the toss, during which we were surrounded by photographers. With slightly overcast conditions Burnley elected to bat. Burnley found themselves in trouble in the first 15 overs as they lost 3 quick wickets leaving them struggling at 49 for 4. However, Burnley recovered to 188 with contributions from Erasmus (67) & Shah (32).

The second innings started with a scare for Ormskirk as they lost an early wicket, but the two Rankin brothers, Alex (59) & Robert (91) turned the game to a one-sided affair, as Ormskirk chased down 188 with a 7 wickets victory.

At the end of the game, there were the customary presentations, including the man-of-the-match award to the obvious winner, the Ormskirk batter Robert Rankin for his match winning score of 91.

Hillal Namajee

Scorers' News

Karen Knott writes that In spite of not being able to hold face to face courses since March last year, help and guidance has been able to be conducted through the online course, the youtube features or from myself directly and 8 candidates who did the online course and wished to progress further were issued with the paper work to start their portfolios.

A level 2 scorer was observed by myself in August and her PD will be conducted in the next few weeks. The same scorer will be presented with her scorers award for the 2019/20 season at the Northern Branch meeting of LACO on October 7th

Update on Accreditation

Peter Robinson reports that during the 2021 season, 22 umpires were accredited at U2A. the league breakdown is: GMCL 9, Palace Shield 6, Liverpool Competition 3, Westmorland League 2, Lancashire League 1, Bolton League 1. This breakdown is consistent with previous seasons.

A useful discussion would be why the GMCL and the Palace Shield, consistently have more U2A candidates than other leagues. This could possibly throw up recruitment ideas which would be useful.

The absence of stage 3 courses meant we had no new U3A candidates. 2 were outstanding from previous years, but neither of the umpires stood in the 2021 season.

The West Lancashire Cricket Society is returning to Southport and Birkdale Sports Club next Wednesday 20th October

Next week's meeting is the Society's AGM at 7.30, prior to Lancashire & England slow left arm spinner **Stephen Parry**'s appearance as the first speaker of the Winter session at 8.00 p.m.

The other speakers of this Winter's programme are:

Nov 17 **Patrick Eager** Cricket photographer, who covered 325 Test matches including 98 Ashes Tests, between 1965 & 2011.

Dec 15 **Harry Pearson** Sports journalist & author who has twice won The Cricket Society/MCC Book of the Year award: in 2011 for "*Slipless in Settle*" & in 2018 for "*Connie: The Marvellous Life of Learie Constantine*".

Jan 19 **Luke Sutton** Former Somerset, Derbyshire & Lancashire wicketkeeper batsman, now an author and sports agent.

Feb 16 **Elizabeth Ammon** The Times' cricket correspondent who has also written for The Guardian, The Independent & The Daily Mirror, as well as Cricket Monthly magazine & Wisden Cricket Monthly.

Mar 25 **Annual Dinner** tba

Membership is open to all and costs £20 for the full Winter programme, or £30 for joint membership. Guests are also welcome at £8 per meeting, refundable on conversion to full membership. For further information contact the Honorary Secretary, David Taylor, on 01772 422 206 or just come along to S&B on Trafalgar Road in Birkdale (PR8 2HF) for any of the meetings.

The Merseyside Cricket Society meets at Sefton Park CC the evening following the WLCS meeting. Its speaker programme is exactly the same line-up, but one day later.