

Boundary assessments of umpires

ADVISORY PREFACE

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UMPIRES & SCORERS ASSOCIATION



**UMPIRES & SCORERS
ASSOCIATION**

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ASSOCIATION**

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The books available include:

An introduction to umpiring
Cricket Umpiring – Getting started
The Player Umpires Companion
The Umpires Companion
Cricket Scoring – Getting started
The Scorers Companion
The Turf Managers Companion
The Laws of Cricket 2000 code – 5th edition 2013

These items are available from NZCUSA Regional Training Officers

Some of the above and other items may be downloaded from the NZC Web-site

www.blackcaps.co.nz/content/grassroots/umpires-and-scorers/default.aspx

The *New Zealand Cricket Umpires & Scorers Association* is dedicated to the training of and assisting umpires, scorers and turf managers to become the best they can be.

As we study and practice to reach our full potential and by taking the time to learn the Laws, our pleasures help create the history of the game that benefits players, coaches and spectators alike.

The type of people we seek as members, are compassionate, dedicated and level-headed, willing to put in that effort.

Only through dedication to one's vocation, can anyone expect to achieve the recognition they deserve. If our publications provide that, then your time spent in reading them cannot be considered wasted.

New Zealand Cricket and the Board of the *New Zealand Cricket Umpires & Scorers Association*, acknowledges and thanks Graeme Lowrie of Timaru for his dedication over many years producing the training resources that makes New Zealand a world leader in the field.

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Foreword

Are our captains' reports on umpires fulfilling their purpose? If you believe they are, then you will believe there is no need to have boundary assessment of umpires.

We already have an on-going programme of training, developing and assessment of umpires; we have an established form of examinations, and in recent seasons we have established a method of boundary assessments. Many other sports have introduced their own methods of assessing their match officials, but few exist in cricket. It is from these other systems and with extensive consultations this system for cricket umpires has been developed.

Because umpiring is so multi-faceted, it is impossible to assess every possible aspect of their role. Whilst appreciating the fact that the assessments of many decisions could never be totally made from the boundary, it is possible to glean something of an umpire's ability by analysing certain aspects of his duties. TV and radio commentators consider themselves skilled at such assessments, but not normally productively. To have a completely objective and accurate assessment it would be necessary to have an assessor stand with the umpire, overlooking his every act. Clearly, this is totally impracticable; unfortunately there is no method which is fool proof and 100% accurate.

Decisions, such as LBW, catches, stumpings and run-outs, are often impossible to judge from anywhere other than from the umpire's position, so it would be totally wrong to attempt to assess the actual decision made by an umpire until technology makes this possible in other than televised matches. As it is impossible, we have to leave that judgement to the umpire himself - therefore we can only complete our assessment from what is observed from the boundary.

We can look at the areas that lead to his decisions and see if there is a fault in the process leading to it. For example, an umpire may be having trouble with run-out decisions. Why should this be so? In order to redress the situation we would start by looking at his positioning when he judges runs and run outs. Is he slow in getting into his correct position, or does he judge the run out from an incorrect position? That could explain why his decisions are queried - giving advice on his positioning may be all that is required. Perhaps, he may be standing off-line or moving slightly for LBW decisions. Perhaps he regularly gets caught-behind decisions wrong, suggesting a hearing or eyesight problem.

These things all reflect on his game and more importantly on the role of our umpire trainers and on his fellow umpires. Boundary assessments are a starting point – not the end product.

It is hoped that all umpires will be assessed at least once a season, preferably twice during the season, ever 2 – 3 months.

It is imperative that detailed and regular feedback is made on all aspects of this assessment system to enable improvements to be made, not only for the assessors, but more importantly, for the umpires themselves. We owe it to the game to do better.

As this system develops in the seasons ahead and with further comment and refinements we may have to consider further development of our Assessors' panel.

GWL

Introduction

Having gained a substantial amount of sound on-field experience, it is considered a natural progression for senior umpires to wish to assist the further education and development of their colleagues by becoming an assessor.

In this role, we will have to rely on the willingness of retired umpires.

In accepting the responsibility of becoming an assessor, one must have the support and encouragement of one's colleagues. More importantly, the umpires being assessed must be willing to accept the comments, positive and negative, and accept that by participating in the program, they will benefit from the experience. By becoming an assessor, the most valuable service you can offer to those of less experience, is the positive and constructive help you are able to pass on.

The Assessor's role

The assessor must be a senior member of the local umpire & scorer association.

He must have had many years of experience as a senior umpire - he must know the stresses and pressures that umpires often endure.

He must have the ability to view and understand the game through the eyes of an umpire, not those of a player.

He should have had several years of experience as a training officer, thus have an in-depth knowledge of the laws and the respective playing conditions.

Ideally, he should be retired from umpiring, but may still be active officiating in social or youth grades.

He must have the ability to quantify the level of the umpire's experience relative to the grade of the match in question.

He must be a person of absolute integrity, with the communicating skills that ensure the individual umpire, when assessed, can benefit from the experience.

He must be able to complete his duties and his approach to the umpire with understanding and encouragement.

He must be able to collate and present the report to accurately reflect the umpire's duties.

He must be able to complete his duties quietly and without interference from any other person.

He must not attempt to assess any umpire's decision; rather, he should assess the things which lead up to that decision as detailed on the report.

We are trying to assess the quantifiable areas of the umpire, rather than assessing or criticising the judgement that went into the making of his decisions.

To this end, the boundary assessment form details many of the areas that can be quantified. It should not be taken these disciplines are all that need be looked at. It is a start and it is believed, that if the umpire concerned gets satisfactory feedback from his assessment, he will have gone a long way to becoming a more competent official.

Practical hints for assessors

Assessors are the guardians of the standards of officiating on the field of play. Always ensure that your report is presented in a creditable manner, totally acceptable to the umpire, no matter how many aspects you raise or how many points you have allocated.

In inviting the umpire to consider the points brought to his attention, assessors will find their role more rewarding. The following may be of assistance:

Arrive early at the game, giving yourself time to introduce yourself to the umpire advising him and both captains of your presence.

After the game starts, keep your involvement with the umpire at an absolute minimum – you do not want him changing any aspect mid-way through the match.

Make notes on all aspects of what you see, ensuring a tick or cross entered in the appropriate place, to accurately reflect the events; then make your additional notes as required.

Make your comments brief and succinct.

Do not make yourself too obvious, but on the other hand, never hide.

Walk around the boundary while observing, it fulfils two purposes; it keeps you active and it gives you the opportunity to observe the game from different focal points.

Give yourself time to plan your time with the umpire – do not rush your debriefing session.

When finalising your report, try to have more positives than negatives.

Make sure you arrive with all you need to fulfil your duties:

Pens, pencils, calculator, report forms and spare paper.

Folding seat, etc, and some refreshments.

A copy of the Laws and playing conditions.

How to mark

This method involves the recoding of aspects the assessor has seen.

Tick the positives and cross the negatives.

As the match progresses, several ticks or crosses may be made, but in almost every case a record should be made why that mark was given.

Involving the captains

Captains are normally delighted and helpful when they learn why the assessor is present.

At an appropriate time, perhaps when his team is batting, a brief discussion can take place.

This should be in the strictest confidence with no other person being present.

Ask the captain questions on any aspect of the game; the laws; the playing conditions and seek his overall assessment of the respective umpire.

If necessary explain to the captain any misinterpretations he has relating to the laws while being circumspect about any decision the umpire may have made.

Above all, listen to what he says; later you may add a few notes to your report.

Never ever let the captain see what you have written in your report.

Why so many disciplines?

Cricket is a complex game, at least from an umpiring perspective; umpires must be able to demonstrate an instant encyclopaedic recall of every clause of every law and reflect that in his game.

The umpiring role, both on and off the field, has many aspects and these all provide elements for evaluation and scrutiny. To do so constructively required a detailed assessment method.

The assessment form is broken down into three areas which, taken together, give an insight into the umpire's development and provides guidelines for his improvement.

This two page assessment form provides for:

Section 1 – deals with:

The umpire's pre-match duties, his meetings & preparation, and his relationship with other participants

The umpire's pre-play duties - things that occur when he goes onto the field for the start of a session of play up to the actual call of PLAY

Here it is expected that all items should be ticked – once only

Section 2 – deals with:

The umpire's general appearance, clothing, attitude, presentation etc. and general matters such as body language, knowledge of the laws, respect etc

Matters that occur during the progress of an innings

The umpire's signals, scorer acknowledgement and the interaction and co-operation with his colleague

The umpire's duties at intervals & interruptions

The events surrounding appeals and dismissals

Section 3 – deals with:

Unfair play and the procedures followed

The umpire's overall control of the game

Finally, an assessment should contain an overall assessment on the umpires performance given the issues noted.

Assessing umpires

If a particular discipline does not happen or is not seen by the assessor, then leave that point blank.

It is more than likely that there will be several such instances where no mark is possible and the assessor need not be concerned about this.

It is important that the assessor watches the whole match but in certain circumstances at least one complete session of play, not just 30 minutes or so. Remember it is impossible to get a complete idea of someone's performance if you have a limited opportunity to do so.

Each discipline is an entity in its own right. The idea is that the umpire can be shown and advised of his strengths and weaknesses giving him something to work on.

After several assessments a clear picture will emerge as to where any weaknesses are, and how improvement can be made.

There is no pass or fail - it is not an examination.

It is meant to be an objective opinion given to help umpires improve their performance.

It can be trying and tiring work assessing an umpire over a whole day however, in order to get meaningful information about umpires it is essential that these assessments be done as thoroughly and as thoughtfully as possible.

Under no circumstances should two or more assessors sit together to 'compare notes'. They should act in isolation, free from distractions of any kind.

Each discipline is marked as it is seen with recorded notes, to provide supporting evidence to the respective grading officer.

After several assessments a clear picture will emerge where an umpire's strengths and weaknesses are, and how improvement can be made.

Having reached this status, most umpires are eager to prove their ability, to be recognised for development and selection for higher honours.

The umpire being debriefed

Until this system becomes universally accepted, it is expected that a few umpires will find it difficult to accept parts if not all of any assessment process.

It is important however, that the umpire concerned does so, and this is going to become part of his training and development; a regime designed for him to become a better umpire. In this there are only winners. The umpires, players, and more importantly, the game itself.

Umpires should be encouraged to take the time to listen to the assessors comments - the comments and marks he has allocated, reflect what **he** has seen and what it looked like from the boundary.

Debriefing procedures – the assessor

Clearly, the most important part of any assessment is the debriefing - i.e. talking through the assessment report with the umpire.

This is **not** to be considered a secret known only to the assessor and the grading officer.

It must be an open assessment between the umpire and assessor, privately and face to face – never over the telephone.

It must not be published, or shared with anyone other than the intended recipients; the privacy and integrity of the assessment process must be retained and assured.

It is not designed to be a time of criticism, rather a time for positive reflection of the match – of things the assessor observed, not what he thought occurred.

While it is not expected that the umpire will remain totally silent and reflective about the comments and marks given, it is not required that the assessor should attempt to justify any particular point raised - they are after-all, the things the assessor **saw**.

The assessor must talk through the points with the umpire and explain why a particular mark was given. Remember that the reason for any mark given, or point raised, needs to be explained especially if it falls below what is expected.

It is just as important to highlight the good areas of the performance as it is the poor ones.

The debriefing must be done sympathetically and with feelings of the umpire concerned borne very much in mind.

The timing of the debriefing meeting must also be considered. Whilst it is best done fairly soon after the match, do not rush in and try and do it too soon. Wait until the umpire has had a chance to relax a little before accosting him with your observations.

A quiet chat over a drink is probably the best time. Debriefing must be limited to 15 – 20 minutes.

The assessor then signs it and forwards it to the grading officer who, on request, should photocopy it for that umpire.

Boundary assessments of umpires

CONFIDENTIAL



Umpire		Colleague		
Panel		Assessor		
Home team		Visitors		
Venue		Date		
Section 1 - Pre-match meetings; Pre-play; General				
Arrival A	Colleague B	Captains C	Scorers D	Turf manager E
Pitch & markings F	Covers G	Boundary H	Obstacles I	Sight-screens J
Field markings K	Team lists L	Supervise toss M	Advise scorers N	Final prep O
5-minute duties P	On-field arrival Q	Stumps R	Mode of delivery S	Give guard T
Confirm colleague U	Confirm players ready V	Confirm time W	Signal scorers X	Call PLAY Y
Section 2 - During play; Signals; Appeals; Intervals				
Positioning A	Team-work B	Counting C	Consultation D	Signals E
NO-BALL F	WIDE G	DEAD-BALL H	Byes I	Leg-byes J
Boundaries K	Acknowledging L	Short-runs-signals M	Out N	Not-out O
Time/Bails P	Scorers Q	Drinks R	Note taking S	Retain ball T

Section 3 - Unfair play; Overall control

Bouncers A	Beamers B	Actions C	Obstructions D	Pitch E
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Conditions F	Substitutes G	Last-hour H	Time-wasting I	Questioning J
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Practice K	Penalties L	Consulting M	Advising captains N	Reports O
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Additional comments

Overall assessment

Copy to umpire **Yes** **No** (Circle) Assessor sign

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

