



International Institute of Cricket Umpiring & Scoring

Unit 2 – People Management



All umpires should be advocates for umpiring. They never get a second chance to make a first impression

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Successful umpires are generally very good people managers

When watching cricket you will notice how well the top-level umpires manage situations that arise during a match. In addition to fulfilling the duties imposed on them by the Laws and match regulations, they will, from time to time, need to control the way the players act towards each other and towards the match officials.

The umpire is not there to tell the players how they should play their part, but is there to make sure that play conforms to the Laws and Spirit of Cricket and to any regulations; and that players behave in a proper manner. This management includes applying the Laws fairly and impartially, being approachable and allowing the match to proceed smoothly. At all levels of the game, good match management relies on the ability to manage the players. So what is the key skill that is required?

The key is effective communication with the players



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He who communicates, leads!

Before we discuss the nature and methods of communication, we need to think about what the problem is. Just what is it that we are trying to achieve? Our main objective is that nothing should be allowed to happen that either spoils the match for the players and spectators or brings the Game of Cricket into disrepute

Players have become more aggressive on the field of play. This can be because the necessary competitiveness is turned into something less wholesome. However difficult they may find it, the umpires must deal with bad behaviour without adding fuel to the flames. They must be able to weigh up the situation quickly and respond with calm authority

The successful umpire will have learnt to remain calm under the pressure of constant appealing. When behaviour goes beyond what is acceptable, your ability to control it will depend upon when and how you communicate

Before you move on, take a moment to think about the problems of dealing with poor behaviour. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Should I jump in immediately I see a problem?
- Should I discuss matters with the players to get my point over to them?
- Should I always apply the Law strictly?
- Should I quote the Law and Spirit to the players?
- Should I allow them one unofficial warning before taking action?
- Should I speak only with the captain?

Think about them; think how you would answer them; and only then go to the next page

What answers do you have? Mostly you should be saying to yourself, '*I'm not sure*'

There is not just one way that is suitable for dealing with all situations. Sometimes you need to act swiftly; sometimes you need to let a player calm down a little first; sometimes you need to nip a situation in the bud without the need to apply the Law; sometimes you need all the power of the Law and all the punishments it can provide. Sometimes there may need to be a discussion, particularly when two players each feel offended by the other. Sometimes, even though the Law might require you to speak to the captain, a word or gesture to a player might calm things down without it becoming 'official'. Sometimes ... sometimes ... Your response will be determined by a number of factors. What might they include? Here are a few ideas:

- The severity of the 'offence' – physical violence is obviously more serious than a vocal expression of disapproval
- The way the 'offence' is committed – with real malice or in what the offender thinks is fun
- Whether something similar has happened earlier
- Whether the same player has been involved earlier
- Whether the match has been, or is becoming, very tense
- Whether a misunderstanding may have caused a problem



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Whether the problem has been caused by an action (a mistake?) by you or your colleague

You can, no doubt, think of more.

Ignoring a problem never works

If there is a problem, you cannot ignore it, you must do something – but what, and how? The short, but not so simple, answer is that your reaction must be appropriate to the situation. If you allow a problem to continue too long you may end up in real difficulty; on the other hand, if you jump in, heavy-handedly, as soon as there is the slightest suggestion of a problem, you could spoil the atmosphere of the match and create further problems for yourself and for your colleague.

You must *communicate* with someone *very soon* – but whom? That will depend on how you intend to handle the situation. You might decide to talk to your colleague, or to the captain or to the player(s). Do not rely on a 'quiet, unofficial warning' to solve every problem. Sometimes it works well; use it too often, however, and the players may start to think you are weak. If you give a warning, whether official or unofficial, you must be prepared to back it up with action if it is ignored. Be careful, think about what might be the result of your action or inaction. Never start off down a path unless you have a good idea where it leads.

A match can degenerate into farce unless the umpires control conflict

The handling of conflict situations requires special people management skills. Problems may arise on the field between two or more players or between a player and an umpire

Players on the field may be upset by an umpire's decision - a bowler may be annoyed because the umpire did not give the striker out; the striker may be annoyed because the umpire did give him out!!

You will require common sense to deal with the unexpected event such as rain interruption, or an awkward player who will not accept a decision.

COMMUNICATION

Good communication skills are associated with:

Confidence

Always try to make decisions without undue hesitation

Being confident will carry you through some awkward moments during a match

Do not, however, bluster. The players will see through it and you will lose respect

Good relationships with others

Meet your colleague before the start of the game and create a rapport with him

Meet with the scorers before the match and discuss things such as where they will be



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sitting and what signalling devices they will use

Talk to the captains as required by the Laws, but also develop a rapport with them. If you all start the match understanding each other, it will be easier to deal with any problems that might arise later

Talk to the players when necessary but don't be over-friendly

Healthy, positive self image

Never umpire a match if you are feeling unwell, it is not fair to the players and your colleague

Never make derogatory comments about your colleague even if you feel he has made a mistake

A positive comment to make about your colleague should be something like '*he's a good umpire*'

Never allow the state of the game to cause you to have negative thoughts, your body-language will be noticed by the players

Ability to cope well with stress and pressure

Never allow players to influence your decisions by their over-zealous appealing

Ignore the negative reactions after you have made a decision

Ability to influence others

Give guidance to a less-experienced colleague particularly about weather and light issues

However, you must never assume a senior role during the match - remember you are a team with equal partners

Leadership

As a team you should take command of any situation which requires a positive decision, such as the covering of the pitch during rain

The team coaches and managers may need guidance on the match regulations

Demonstrate to the players and officials that you and your colleague are in charge of the match

Never behave in a domineering way

You cannot lead without good communication. Remember; *He who communicates, leads*

Good communication skills are demonstrated by:

Voice

Call No ball, Wide ball, Dead ball and Not out with a loud voice so that it can be heard by everyone on the field of play

If asked, BRIEFLY explain to players why you have given a decision, do not get involved in a heated exchange of views

Whenever necessary communicate with the captain(s)



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Signals

- Indicate clearly to the players and when the ball is dead to the scorers
- Use a signal to your colleague after 4 or 5 balls in an over
- When at the Striker's end, assist your colleague by indicating the height of a delivery or that the striker is batting out of his crease
- Supplement your call of Play with some sort of signal to the bowler indicating that he should start his run-up – a forward waive of the arm beside the body should suffice

Written

- Keep a record of the overs bowled by each bowler, this can assist the fielding captain
- Keep a record of the runs scored, wickets taken and the overs bowled plus the times of any intervals or interruptions
- Write a report, with your colleague, if there has been any indiscipline by any of the players
- Complete any administrative reports at the end of the match

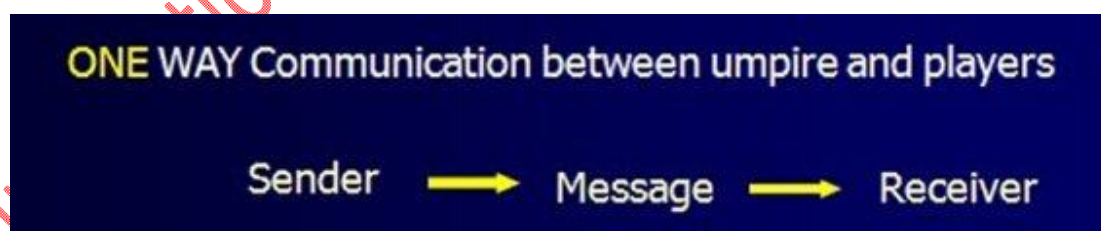
Body language

- Everything you do must not only be intentional, it must look intentional
- Never show lack of interest in the match or your duties
- Don't stand with hands in pockets
- Try to indicate to the players that you are enjoying umpiring the match
- When appropriate, share a humorous moment with the players
- Answer all appeals in the same tone of voice and with the same body language

Eye contact

- When giving a batsman out, look him in the eye
- When saying Not out, look the bowler (or appropriate fielder) in the eye
- When confronting the captain, do not look away from him

How should you deliver a message? Sometimes it is not necessary to do anything more than make a statement and ensure that the message has been received. This is called 'One way communication'



The Sender (umpire) sends a Message (Not out) to the Receiver (perhaps batsman or fielder)

Examples of one-way communication

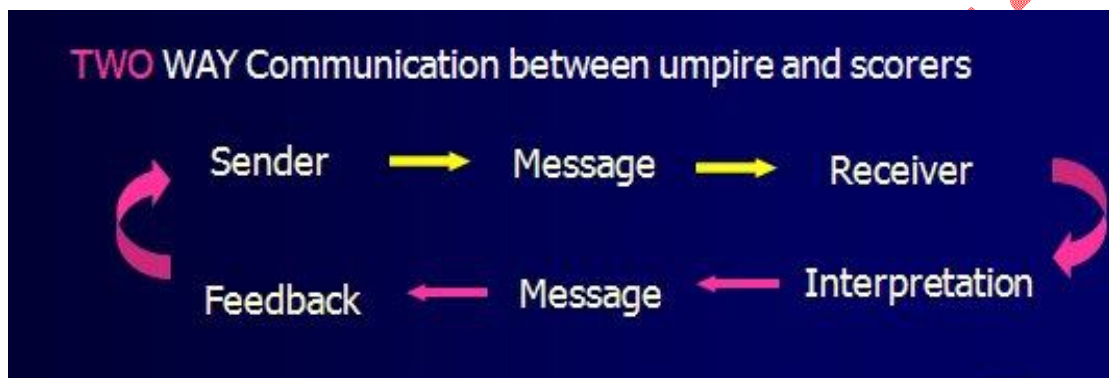


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A request to the players to avoid damaging the pitch
The answering of an appeal
Signals to the scorers

The Receiver does not reply except, perhaps, to acknowledge that the message has been received. Certainly no discussion takes place

On some occasions it is necessary to get some sort of feedback and act upon the response, sometimes with several exchanges of information. Not surprisingly, this is known as 'Two way communication'



The Sender (umpire) asks the Receiver (captain/player) for information and then acts upon it.

Two-way communication will normally be used in dealing with conflict. If two players, perhaps a fielder and a batsman, are having a heated argument, the umpires need to know what it is about so that they can tell the players that they have had their say and now they need to get on with the match. Just a short discussion to understand everyone's point of view will help calm things down

Potential influences on a message

Age

As an umpire you may have to modify a 'message' to junior players who may be less familiar with the Laws and regulations for a match. Older players sometimes think they know best. They might be mistaken!

Language

There may be problems with players who do not have the same first language as the umpires and who do not understand the meaning of the 'message'

Experiences

You may want to recall a previous experience when delivering a 'message' - how you dealt with a similar situation in a previous match



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Status

As an experienced and respected umpire, your 'message' may be more readily accepted by the players. You must, however, earn the respect; it does not come just with years of experience

Attitude

Your attitude towards the players and their attitude towards you may influence the willingness to accept a 'message'

A person's reactions to what you say and do may be affected by their cultural background. Always make allowances for this. Treat everyone the same. No favourites – no enemies – just players! You cannot expect a player to respect and understand your position unless you show you are trying to understand his!

Familiarity

It will be easier for you to deliver a 'message' if you have umpired some the players before and have their respect

CONFLICT - PLAYER VS PLAYER

Reasons for conflict between players

Previous conflict between these players or their teams

In a local league, there may be clubs who have been aggressive towards each other in previous seasons - perhaps one of the teams batted too slowly or there was an incident between two opponents. The league authorities will be aware of the situation and will usually appoint experienced umpires to the match. If you know of, or are warned about, such a situation between clubs you are to umpire, you must be very careful how you let that knowledge affect your umpiring. Do not let it change your basic style, simply be more aware of the potential trouble spots and act as soon as possible to prevent escalation of problems. You might be able to reduce the chances of trouble by saying to the captains something like, "*I understand there has been difficulty between your two clubs; there is no reason why it should prevent us all having an enjoyable match to-day*"

Former team mates now opponents

A player may have left a club to go and play with another club in the same league. There may be acrimonious reasons why the player left and his former team-mates may not be pleased to see him at his new club. An experienced umpire will note the situation and watch for any possible conflict

Sledging or intimidation

Banter between players, which sometimes can be humorous, is perfectly acceptable but as soon as players become abusive and/or personal, you and your colleague should immediately defuse the situation by reminding the captain that the Spirit of Cricket requires the players to have respect for their opponents. If you act soon enough, the players will see where your limits of tolerance are and will, normally, stay more or less within those limits, even if they do try to push those boundaries a little



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Frustration at state of match

When a match is interrupted by bad weather, one side may wish to continue because they feel that they are in a winning position whereas the other team will be keen to leave the field. As fielders leave the field they may exchange words with the batsmen, you and your colleague must intervene and inform the players that you are the judges of the weather conditions

Missed opportunities

Players on the same side may create conflict by dropping an important catch or missing the ball on the boundary which will not please the bowler who may become aggressive towards a member of his own side

Some umpires have a dislike of getting involved whilst others may step in too quickly. A few important matters need to be considered

Never react too quickly

A disappointed bowler needs a little time to cool down. If the incident occurs during an over, consider waiting until the over is completed before saying anything. An astute captain will realise his bowlers cannot perform to their optimum if they are rattled and will quite often speak to the player. If this happens, wait to see if it produces the desired effect. If not, you should have a quiet word saying something like "*Come on, don't let things get too heated out here*" This is a non-threatening way of defusing a potential problem further into the match. If the bowler shows no interest in improving his behaviour, involve the captain immediately and request him to take action. Just as the best batsmen time their strokes well, so the best umpires time their interventions well. For most batsmen, the acquisition of the skill of good timing takes much practice and some coaching – umpiring is no different! Seek advice from colleagues and work at it

Often the fielding side or a batsman will feel aggrieved over a decision

Stand by your decision

To show that you are in control and of good temperament you should stand by any decision you make and reject any feeling of guilt. If a decision is challenged you might have to explain some aspect of Law to the player(s) concerned. Other than that, you should not offer any explanation other than to say you have made your judgement on what you have seen and heard. You could also say something like, "*It's obvious we disagree on what has happened but the decision has been made so let's get on with the game*"

If an error has been made, you must NEVER try to even it up as two mistakes over the one incident leads to a loss of respect



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COMMUNICATING WITH PLAYERS

You must always be ready to communicate

Show a willingness to be 'available'

You should be a good listener and have a genuine interest in the application of the Laws because interaction between umpires and players will foster acceptance and mutual respect. Never admit to making a mistake or offer an apology for an error

Walk towards the bowler at the end of an over

If you have been holding the bowler's sweater or cap, approach him at the end of the over to return them to him. Never volunteer information or try to justify a decision you have made in the over and if the bowler asks for an explanation, answer with an even voice be as non-committal as possible (*I couldn't give that out!*) and show complete confidence about your decision making

Role of captain

The captain may think he has a right to approach you about some of your decisions and some aspects of the Laws. He does not. If, however, he queries a decision, you are quite within your rights to refuse to give any explanation until the match is over and, even then, you might decide to do nothing more than explain the Law. On the other hand, you may choose to give a simple explanation, such as 'not enough travelling distance' or 'the noise could have been bat on pad – I couldn't be sure', but do not enter into a prolonged discussion. As you become more experienced a different degree of detail can be used when explaining your decisions. Even if you feel upset about the players lack of acceptance of your decision, never become abusive towards the players, you will lose their respect

ATTITUDE

Why are some umpires more successful?

Most successful sports people say that a positive, enthusiastic and responsible attitude was a key factor in achieving their success

You should not be looking for minor technical violations of the Laws just to show you know everything in the law book. If you cannot simply apply the Laws without being smug about your knowledge, you will gain a reputation that will be very difficult to reverse

Let the players play the game - do not impose yourself on the players with an officious attitude. . Do not be a showman. Just do the job of umpiring to the best of your ability. The best umpires will control the match well without being noticed

During a match, there will be a number of occasions when you can be complimentary towards the players - the wicket-keeper may replace the bails after an unsuccessful appeal, say '*Thank you*'



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If you need to speak to the captain about one of his players, use *'Please'* and when he has spoken to the player say *'Thank you'*

You are not trying to be everybodies friend, you are just being courteous

How can attitude be improved at training sessions?

Regular attendance

There are many umpires' associations which provide for the training and development of umpires and we recommend that all aspiring umpires join their local association. Courses will be held for inexperienced umpires who can gain an umpiring qualification. Other courses will be held for more experienced umpires when local match regulations change or the MCC produce a revision of the Laws of Cricket. Even experienced umpires should make an effort to attend any courses which are organised on their behalf

Display an enthusiastic approach to training sessions

When attending any umpiring course make an effort to contribute to Law discussions. Very experienced umpires can recall previous scenarios which can be used to illustrate an umpiring point of law. Encourage other members of the association to attend the training courses

Acknowledge them as an opportunity to learn

In recent years, some of the amendments that have been made to the Laws of Cricket have been in response to circumstances that have first appeared in International cricket. Nevertheless, the Laws are written for all cricket. Sometimes governing bodies – local as well as national - introduce playing conditions that modify aspects of the Laws. Discussions with your colleagues will be an invaluable way of ensuring that you are fully familiar with all such changes. In addition, there are a number of Internet websites (the MCC website at www.lords.org is worth a visit) which highlight these changes but they are best discussed at a local level.

Some international governing bodies for cricket such as Cricket Australia (CA) and the England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB), have introduced pathways for aspiring umpires which require them to attain a higher level of qualification before moving up the umpiring ladder. These qualifications cannot be awarded unless the umpire attends the appropriate course - you never stop learning

Meet all financial obligations

Your local association will have expenditure throughout the year for items such as room hire, production of course notes and payments to speakers and you will be expected to pay an annual membership fee. Make sure your fee is paid on time

Be prepared to stand for office

Your association will need a number of officers to supervise the activities of the association; at the Annual General Meeting be prepared to stand for office in a positive way



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Support your Association at all times

Never be negative about your association, always support it even when things have not gone according to plan. When you are umpiring away from your normal association be prepared to be positive when people ask about your association

Attend meetings

It is important that you and other members are up-to-date with changes to the Laws and local regulations governing cricket matches in which you will be standing. The best way to learn is by attending an association meeting because you can ask questions about anything you may not understand. The officers of the association are always pleased when meetings are well attended

Accept any feedback/criticism in good spirit

Many leagues have grading schemes which allow captains to report on the performance of the umpires in a match. Unfortunately, the captain's opinion may be swayed by the result of the match which did not go in his favour. If the captains are instructed in the completion of the match report, the grades received by an umpire throughout the season should reflect his performance in all his matches

The grade can be supported by the observations of a boundary assessor who will assess the umpires performance during a match. There may be feedback to the umpire highlighting some weaknesses in his performance. The umpire should regard all such feedback as mentoring, should accept any criticism and endeavour to rectify any faults, seeking help if that is required. No-one is perfect, so never be afraid to ask for advice

Accept all appointments in a positive manner

Every umpire should endeavour to be appointed to a higher grade of match but there are only a limited number of fixtures each week. You should accept whichever fixture you are appointed to and approach the match with a positive attitude. Remember that players will be glad to see umpires at their match if it means that the match will not be umpired by players

Encourage and support colleagues

The Laws refer to many instances where the umpires *'together agree ...'* and it is essential that teamwork is carried onto the field and maintained throughout the day's play

Sometimes you may not like your colleague as a person but you must have a professional attitude towards him. You must be there for each other at all times because you are a team and particularly during conflict situations you must be ready to give support to each other. Players will notice when you do not give support to your colleague and you will lose their respect and more importantly your colleague will be disappointed as well

Never criticise colleagues

As a team, the umpires must stand together at all times even when one of them has made a fundamental error. If your colleague has made the error, go across to him at the next convenient time and encourage him to forget what has happened and that he needs to concentrate on the rest of the match. Be positive and never criticise your colleague



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when approached by players or officials. Sometimes players and club officials may be upset, particularly after the match, remain positive about your colleague even though you know he has made a mistake

Talk positively about umpiring

Whenever you are at a match try to broadcast your enthusiasm for umpiring and ask players whether they have considered becoming umpires at the end of their playing careers. Encourage players, club officials and spectators to attend your local association meetings, they may be able to contribute a different view about umpiring

The most important match today

Remember that the match you are ready to umpire is the most important match for all the players, club officials and spectators. It may be a match between two junior teams who have never played before or it may be a top of the table clash between two Premier League teams containing overseas Test professionals. All the participants will expect you to perform well, treat them with respect and allow their match to run smoothly so that everyone enjoys the experience

PERSONAL PRESENTATION AND LIFESTYLE

People associated with cricket expect umpires to be:

Trustworthy

A trustworthy umpire is someone in whom the players can count on to do as expected and be reliable when making decisions. In general, in order for trust to be earned, integrity must be proven over a period of time. However, if you become untrustworthy, the poor reputation gained will spread quickly and it will be difficult for you to recover your reputation

Mature

Maturity is used to indicate how you respond to the circumstances of the match in an appropriate and adaptive manner. Responses by you are generally learned rather than instinctive, and are not determined by your age. You should be aware of the correct time to behave and knowing when to act appropriately, according to the scenario

Responsible

Players expect you to be a person who has integrity and is answerable for any decisions made during a match. Incidents can cause the umpires to become very serious but remember that there is a place for humour in the game at the appropriate time

Fit

You should be physically fit and mentally alert when preparing to umpire a match. Never umpire the match if you feel unwell or a personal matter will cause your level of concentration to drop, it is not fair to the players and your colleague

Competent

Players will expect you to have studied the Laws before you attempt to umpire a match. In higher Leagues, it will a requirement that all the umpires have taken an umpiring course and received accreditation. Test match umpires will have attended advanced



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umpiring courses to increase their knowledge and their ability to umpire at the highest level

PRE-MATCH PRESENTATION

Successful umpires pay attention to their pre-match preparation which sets the pattern for what is to follow

The aim of the pre-match preparation is to have you in a relaxed, confident and composed state of mind when play commences

To achieve this aim consistently, you need to develop a plan which includes aspects such as arrival at the ground at the anticipated time without having to rush

Your bag should be packed well before departure time preferably the night before the match

Arrangements relating to the match, such as the name of your colleague and start times, should be clarified in the days leading up to the match to eliminate any possibility of stress or anxiety

Read the match regulations the night before the match and always carry the match regulations on the field of play, you never know when you might have to refer to them

Wherever practical, stressful situations should be avoided before the match - conflict at home, work demands, etc

Check for local roadworks which may delay your journey

Look forward to the challenge of the match and have a positive approach and be confident that your preparation will be adequate to deal with whatever may arise

Good pre-match preparation is dependent upon a well-developed plan, a determination to implement the plan prior to play and a clear vision of the state of mind that is required