



**All Club Secretaries, Chairman's & Captains**

29<sup>th</sup> June 2018

Dear All

**RE: Supporting and protecting our players, clubs and officials**

While on paper it would suggest that the Southern Premier League is enjoying an improved season with regard to disciplinary and behaviour issues, based on the small number of reports received, this I am afraid does not paint an accurate picture of the situation in which we find ourselves in.

Owing to the seriousness of this communication I would request that all reasonable attempts be made to circulate this letter to all playing members of your club and to the officers of your management committee.

I make no apology for the length of this letter the reasons for which I am sure will become clear.

**Background**

At the time of writing five umpires have either resigned from the South Coast Panel or are currently considering their position. At the same time a number of players from across the league have also expressed feelings of frustration and upset with regard to the behaviour of players and clubs both off and on the field.

The management committee of the Southern Premier League are in agreement that something needs to be done urgently in order to address this trend and ensure that all players and officials can be given the best chance to enjoy the cricket they play within our great league.

Within society as a whole, abuse and intimidation is not acceptable and as such it is certainly not acceptable within sport and is inclusive of all Southern Premier games and related activities.

*In deciding what action to take the league would like to spell out the following principles*

1. The league is fully committed to the ECB code of conduct and spirit of cricket
2. The players and officials within the league should be able to participate without fear of abuse, intimidation and play within an environment in keeping with the standards and tradition of our game
3. The league must protect the well-being of their committee members and establish protocol for when they themselves are officiating in matches
4. Our umpires always act with integrity and as such should not be questioned inappropriately on the field, off the field or subsequently following a match



5. Scorers are an integral part of the match officiating team.
6. The management committee apply the rules and regulations of the league without fear or favour, affection or ill will. We are at all times, consistent and fair regardless of club or player involved.
7. Clubs are reminded of their responsibilities under the club charter and especially in relation to the use of social media.



### On-field behaviour

The expectations and standards of behaviour expected by our players is clearly defined within the ECB code of conduct and spirit of cricket.

For the avoidance of doubt, a copy of this code is included in appendix A of this letter. I would like to however, bring to your attention to two of the specific points.

1.1.2 – The Captains are responsible at all times for ensuring that play is conducted within the Spirit of Cricket as well as the laws

1.1.8 – Clubs must take adequate steps to ensure the good behaviour of their members and supporters towards players and umpires

In recent weeks there have been a number of incidents involving spectators abusing umpires which must STOP immediately with an expectation that clubs are taking steps to ensuring the safe guarding of players and officials alike. Further issue from spectators will result in action being taken against the club (and individuals should they be registered as a player in the SPCL) under section 1.1.8 as detailed above.

### Expectation of Umpires & Personal Responsibility

While it is true that the umpires are responsible for the management of all matters relating to our games from the moment they arrive at the ground I would like to make the following points

- a. While the umpires are expected to deal with on-field behavioural issues what seems to be continually forgotten is that they are not responsible for the fact that a first 'trigger' event has occurred. For example, if players are engaged in an exchange of aggressive words this would only happen after the first player steps over the line. We must shift our focus to these first 'triggers' and not just all of the subsequent events where often things enter into a 'he said, she said' scenario
- b. Umpires cannot be expected to see and hear every single thing that happens on the field of play. Just because a player has seen or heard a behavioural issue they should not automatically assume the umpire has
- c. Players and clubs alike should expect consistency from umpires, with the focus of which being within the context of single games and not what happened last week or the week before or indeed last year
- d. Clubs are reminded that if there is dis-satisfaction with an umpire's performance during a match this should be reflected in the umpire's marks (**with appropriate supporting comments**). In the case of serious issue or misconduct the South Coast Panel have their own complaints procedure which should be dealt with directly between the club and Chairman or Secretary of the panel. The contact details for which can be found in the league handbook or website.



### SPCL Management Committee Members as Match Officials

As well as their responsibility with the league a number of people also serve as umpires or scorers throughout our divisions.

I wish to make clear that while acting in a match official capacity, committee members should NOT be expected to become involved with incidents in the match and should not be asked to do so. This not only creates a clear conflict of interest situation but can also affect the well-being of these hard-working individuals.

For the avoidance of doubt players, spectators and club members should not make approaches with questions like “What are you going to do about that” or make inappropriate comments about the league, its member clubs or committee members.

### **Having taking all of the above into account the management committee wishes to announce the following interventions with effect from 7<sup>th</sup> July 2018**

1. A pre-match briefing should take place between both umpires, both captains and the vice captains at the toss.
  - a. A copy of this letter will be referred by the umpires and all present shall be reminded of the contents of appendix A.
  - b. Umpires shall take the opportunity to cover the approach to be taken as required in appendix B (see point 3)
  - c. Umpires will also outline their specific expectations of behaviour for the match in question
2. We recommend a post-match briefing should always take place between umpires, captains and vice captains in which incidents (no matter how small) can be discussed with a view to preventing in the future or to establish decisions made by the umpires.
3. Law 42 (relating to on-field behaviour) will now be fully applied giving umpires more scope to control on field incidents. (See Appendix B)
4. In line with previous guidance from the ECB umpire’s reports shall always be accepted as correct unless proven otherwise. Reports will be accepted by individual umpires.
5. Match bans within the leagues standard tariff shall be doubled for the remainder of the 2018 season
6. If in the opinion of the umpire they have not discharged their responsibility for their teams behaviour, Captains will be automatically issued with a 1 match suspended ban in the event one of their players are found guilty of misconduct and they are issued with a ban. Subsequent bans in the same season will result in the ban(s)



being activated.



7. Clubs will be deducted 5 points every ban issued. Where a spectator is involved the club will be fined £50
8. Approaching of a SPCL committee member in relation to a match issue outside of their responsibilities as a match official shall result in a 4 match ban or a level 5 fine (£100) in the case of a non-player.
9. At the end of the season the league will hold Divisional Chairman's meeting to discuss behavioural strategy for the 2019 season.

I am sure you share my regret at the need to take such extraordinary steps, but action must be taken to protect the interests of all involved both now and in the future.

Should anything be unclear, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the management committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Veal', written in a cursive style.

**STEVE VEAL**  
League Chairman

Copy to South Coast Panel  
SPCL website



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## APPENDIX A: ECB CODE OF CONDUCT & SPIRIT OF CRICKET

### 1. ECB CODE OF CONDUCT AND SPIRIT OF CRICKET

#### 1.1 Code of Conduct

- 1.1.1 The ECB is committed to maintaining the highest standards of behaviour and conduct. This Code of Conduct incorporates the Spirit of Cricket, as set out below. It applies to all matches played under the auspices of the ECB and may be applied to cricket in general.
- 1.1.2 The captains are responsible at all times for ensuring that play is conducted within the Spirit of Cricket as well as within the Laws.
- 1.1.3 Players and team officials must at all times accept the umpire's decision. Players must not show dissent at the umpire's decision or react in a provocative or disapproving manner towards another player or a spectator.
- 1.1.4 Players and team officials shall not intimidate, assault or attempt to intimidate or assault an umpire, another player or a spectator.
- 1.1.5 Players and team officials shall not use crude and/or abusive language (known as "sledging") nor make offensive gestures or hand signals nor deliberately distract an opponent.
- 1.1.6 Players and team officials shall not make racially abusive comments nor indulge in racially abusive actions against fellow players, officials, members and supporters. Clubs must operate an active open door membership policy whilst respecting player qualification regulations and welcome players/members irrespective of ethnic origin.
- 1.1.7 Players and team officials shall not use or in any way be concerned in the use or distribution of illegal drugs.
- 1.1.8 Clubs must take adequate steps to ensure the good behaviour of their members and supporters towards players and umpires.



## APPENDIX B: LAW 42

### 42.1 Unacceptable conduct

**42.1.1** The umpires shall act upon any unacceptable conduct. Four Levels of offence and the corresponding actions by the umpires are identified as Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 offences in 42.2 to 42.5.

**42.1.2** If either umpire considers that the conduct of a player, at any time during the match, is unacceptable, the umpire concerned shall call and signal Dead ball. This call may be delayed until the umpire is satisfied that it will not disadvantage the non-offending side.

**42.1.3** The umpire concerned shall report the matter to the other umpire and together they shall decide whether misconduct has occurred. If so, they shall determine into which of the Levels the conduct falls, as set out in 42.2 to 42.5 below, and then apply the related sanctions.

**42.1.4** For each Level 1 to 4, if the offence is by a batsman, the umpires shall summon the offending player's captain to the field. Solely for the purpose of this Law, the batsmen at the wicket may not deputise for their captain.

### 42.2 Level 1 offences and action by umpires

**42.2.1** Any of the following actions by a player shall constitute a Level 1 offence:

- wilfully mistreating any part of the cricket ground, equipment or implements used in the match
- showing dissent at an umpire's decision by word or action

using language that, in the circumstances, is obscene, offensive or insulting



- appealing excessively
- advancing towards an umpire in an aggressive manner when appealing
- any other misconduct, the nature of which is, in the opinion of the umpires, equivalent to a Level 1 offence.

**42.2.2** If such an offence is committed, 42.2.2.1 to 42.2.2.6 shall be implemented as appropriate, according to whether or not it is the first offence at any Level.

42.2.2.1 The umpire shall call Time, if necessary.

42.2.2.2 Together the umpires shall summon and inform the offending player's captain that an offence at this Level has occurred.

42.2.2.3 If the Level 1 offence is the first offence, at any Level, by that team, the umpire shall

42.2.2.3.1 issue a first and final warning which shall apply to all members of the team for the remainder of the match.

42.2.2.3.2 warn the offending player's captain that any further Level 1 offence by any member of his/her team shall result in the award of 5 Penalty runs to the opposing team.

42.2.2.4 If the Level 1 offence follows an offence, at any Level, by that team, the umpire shall award 5 Penalty runs to the opposing team.

42.2.2.5 As soon as practicable the umpire shall call Play.

42.2.2.6 The umpires together shall report the occurrence as soon as possible after the match to the Executive of the offending player's team and to any Governing Body responsible for the match, who shall take such further action as is considered appropriate against the captain, any other individuals concerned and, if appropriate, the team.

### **42.3 Level 2 offences and action by umpires**

**42.3.1** Any of the following actions by a player shall constitute a Level 2 offence:

- showing serious dissent at an umpire's decision by word or action
- making inappropriate and deliberate physical contact with another player

throwing the ball at a player, umpire or another person in an inappropriate and dangerous manner

- using language or gesture to another player, umpire, team official or spectator that, in the circumstances, is obscene or of a seriously insulting nature

- or any other misconduct, the nature of which is, in the opinion of the umpires, equivalent to a Level 2 offence.



**42.3.2** If such an offence is committed, 42.3.2.1 to 42.3.2.6 shall be implemented.

42.3.2.1 The umpire shall call Time, if necessary.

42.3.2.2 Together the umpires shall summon and inform the offending player's captain that an offence at this Level has occurred.

42.3.2.3 The umpire shall award 5 Penalty runs to the opposing team.

42.3.2.4 The umpire shall warn the offending player's captain that any future Level 1 offence by any member of his/her team shall result in the award of 5 Penalty runs to the opposing team.

42.3.2.5 As soon as practicable the Umpire shall call Play.

42.3.2.6 The umpires together shall report the occurrence as soon as possible after the match to the Executive of the offending player's team and to any Governing Body responsible for the match, who shall take such further action as is considered appropriate against the captain, any other individuals concerned and, if appropriate, the team.

#### **42.4 Level 3 offences and action by umpires**

**42.4.1** Either of the following actions by a player shall constitute a Level 3 offence:

- intimidating an umpire by language or gesture
- threatening to assault a player or any other person except an umpire. See 42.5.1.

**42.4.2** If such an offence is committed, 42.4.2.1 to 42.4.2.8 shall be implemented.

42.4.2.1 The umpire shall call Time, if necessary.

42.4.2.2 Together the umpires shall summon and inform the offending player's captain that an offence at this Level has occurred.

42.4.2.3 The umpires shall direct the captain to remove the offending player immediately from the field of play for a period in accordance with the following:



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42.4.2.3.1 In a match where the innings are not limited to a number of overs, the player shall be suspended from the field of play for 10 overs.

42.4.2.3.2 In a match where the innings are limited to a number of overs, the player shall be suspended for one fifth of the number of overs allocated to the current innings at its commencement. If, in calculating the length of the suspension, a part-over results, it shall be considered as a whole over. Furthermore, any balls remaining in the over in progress at the time of suspension shall not count towards the overs for which the player is suspended.

42.4.2.3.3 If the offending player is a fielder, no substitute shall be allowed for him/her. The offending player may return to the field of play after serving the period of suspension and may bowl immediately.

42.4.2.3.4 If a bowler is suspended mid-over, then that over must be completed by a different bowler, who shall not have bowled the previous over nor shall he/she bowl the next over.

42.4.2.3.5 If the offending player is a not out batsman, he/she shall be replaced by another member of his/her team. The offending player may return to bat after having served the suspension only at the fall of a wicket. If no batsman is available to bat during a batsman's suspension, the innings is completed. If the offending player does not continue his/her innings for whatever reason, he/she is to be recorded as Retired – not out.

42.4.2.3.6 If the offending player is a dismissed member of the batting side, the period of suspension will not commence until the start of the next innings. Furthermore, in these circumstances, the offending player may not act as a runner during the innings when he/she was suspended.

42.4.2.3.7 Warn the offending player's captain that any future Level 1 offence shall result in the award of 5 Penalty runs to the opposing team.

42.4.2.3.8 Any overs remaining to be served from a suspension shall be carried forward to the next and subsequent innings of the match. A part over at the end of the innings shall not count towards the overs for which the player is suspended.

42.4.2.4 As soon as practicable, the umpire shall

- award 5 Penalty runs to the opposing team

- signal the Level 3 penalty to the scorers

42.4.2.5 The umpires together shall report the occurrence as soon as possible after the match to the Executive of the offending player's team and to any Governing Body responsible for the match, who shall take such further action as is considered appropriate against the captain, any other individuals concerned and, if appropriate, the team.



## **42.5 Level 4 offences and action by umpires**

**42.5.1** Any of the following actions by a player shall constitute a Level 4 offence:

- threatening to assault an umpire
- making inappropriate and deliberate physical contact with an umpire
- physically assaulting a player or any other person
- committing any other act of violence.

**42.5.2** If such an offence is committed, 42.5.2.1 to 42.5.2.5 shall be implemented.

42.5.2.1 The umpire shall call Time, if necessary.

42.5.2.2 Together the umpires shall summon and inform the offending player's captain that an offence at this Level has occurred.

42.5.2.3 The umpires shall direct the captain to remove the offending player immediately from the field of play for the remainder of the match and shall apply the following:

42.5.2.3.1 If the offending player is a fielder, no substitute shall be allowed for him/her. He/She is to be recorded as Retired – out at the commencement of any subsequent innings in which his/her team is the batting side.

42.5.2.3.2 If a bowler is suspended mid-over, then that over must be completed by a different bowler, who shall not have bowled the previous over nor shall be permitted to bowl the next over.

42.5.2.3.3 If the offending player is a batsman he/she is to be recorded as Retired – out in the current innings, unless he/she has been dismissed under any of Laws 32 to 39, and at the commencement of any subsequent innings in which his/her team is the batting side. If no further batsman is available to bat, the innings is completed.

42.5.2.3.4 Warn the offending player's captain that any future Level 1 offence shall result in the award of 5 Penalty runs to the opposing team.



42.5.2.4 As soon as practicable, the umpire shall

- award 5 Penalty runs to the opposing team
- signal the Level 4 penalty to the scorers
- call Play.

42.5.2.5 The umpires together shall report the occurrence as soon as possible after the match to the Executive of the offending player's team and to any Governing Body responsible for the match, who shall take such further action as is considered appropriate against the captain, any other individuals concerned and, if appropriate, the team.

## **42.6 Captain refusing to remove a player from the field**

**42.6.1** If a captain refuses to carry out an instruction under 42.4.2.3 or 42.5.2.3, the umpires shall invoke Law 16.3 (Umpires awarding a match).

**42.6.2** If both captains refuse to carry out instructions under 42.4.2.3 or 42.5.2.3 in respect of the same incident, the umpires shall instruct the players to leave the field. The match is not concluded as in Law 12.9 (Conclusion of match) and there shall be no result under Law 16 (The result).

## **42.7 Additional points relating to Level 3 and Level 4 offences**

**42.7.1** If a player, while acting as wicket-keeper, commits a Level 3 or Level 4 offence, Law 24.1.2 (Substitute fielders) shall not apply, meaning that only a nominated player may act as wicket-keeper, even if another fielder becomes injured or ill and is replaced by a substitute.

**42.7.2** A nominated player who has a substitute or runner will also suffer the penalty for any Level 3 or Level 4 offence committed by the substitute or runner. However, only the substitute or runner will be reported under Laws 42.4.2.5 or 42.5.2.5.