

Umpiring Commission



AGM Report - March 2025

It is unfortunate that the Commission has failed to organise a course or exam in 2024 for the second year in a row. While some individuals may use this as a justification for our challenges in finding suitable umpires for national events, this perspective offers a rather limited understanding of the underlying issues.

In fact, the decision not to organise a course was taken because of the lack of available umpires, which also makes it difficult to appoint umpires for national events.

It has been suggested that the lack of people interested in becoming an umpire is because they think the exam is too hard to pass. There is no evidence to support this, as the grades for each level (Club, County and National) have already been reduced and there hasn't been any real change in the number of candidates coming forward. A more plausible explanation is that there is no demand for an umpire at a club or regional event, so no one tries to recruit new umpires as they are considered unnecessary.

This year we tried a different approach, going directly to the clubs and asking them to register members interested in becoming umpires for a course to be organised in April. The result was much better than we thought it would be, with 13 registrations, although most of them are over 70 years of age.

It is important to recognise that age should not prevent anyone from becoming an umpire in our sport. However, it is clear that this choice will affect how long they can umpire and the level of responsibility they will have as an umpire.

Pétanque England would like to see more young people becoming umpires and trying to reach the highest standards, with the ultimate aim of qualifying at European or International level. At present these examinations are only open to those under the age of 60.

But there is a glimmer of hope: a 34-year-old woman has come forward as a candidate. This suggests that the future for Pétanque England umpiring may not be as bleak as we thought. I'm also pleased to inform you that Gareth Sullivan has been invited to attend the CEP Men's Triple European Championships in Spain. There he will be working with the European umpires and retaking the European umpire exam.

I'm sure everyone will join the commission in wishing Gareth the best of luck.

Meanwhile the Commission hopes that regions and clubs will rise to the challenge of recruiting new umpires. If you know someone who would like to become an umpire, please get in touch.

In closing, I would like to say a big thank you to the umpires who worked at the national events in the last year. These are David Mason, Bob Parker, John Edmondson, Kevin Moss and most notably Gareth Sullivan who attended by far the most events. Without these people, there would have been many more events without an umpire.

PE Umpiring Commission Executive:

Mike Pegg (Chair), John Thatcher, Gareth Sullivan and Kevin Moss