

Cheshire Cricket Board Welcomes 24 new Umpires to the ECB Umpire Course at Stretford

By Debayan Dey | Cheshire ACO BAME Representative

On Sunday 11 October 2026, I had the pleasure of attending the ECB Umpire Course at Stretford Sports Village, organised by Cheshire Cricket Board. It was wonderful to see 24 learners from different backgrounds and cricketing communities coming together to learn more about umpiring!

Having had such an enjoyable and rewarding umpiring season myself, I was really pleased to be invited along as a Cheshire ACO representative and be part of this fantastic initiative.

First of all, a huge thank you to Rehaan from Cheshire Cricket Board, who put so much time and effort into making this happen. From reaching out to players and encouraging them to attend, to organising the course and looking at ways to make it more accessible, I know a lot of work went on behind the scenes. Seeing such a great turnout on the day was really encouraging, and Rehaan deserves a lot of credit for bringing everyone together.

We were also very fortunate to have Fiona and Stewart (ECB Tutors) delivering the course. Both are fantastic tutors, and from the feedback I received afterwards, they delivered a really enjoyable, engaging and informative session.

Many of the learners already had plenty of experience playing cricket, but as we all know, understanding the game as a player and looking at it from an umpire's perspective can be quite different! A few people I spoke to afterwards mentioned how much they had enjoyed the course and how it helped them develop a better understanding of the Laws of Cricket and the decisions umpires have to make.

One of my favourite parts of the day was seeing so many familiar faces. Some were people I'd played alongside or against in indoor tennis-ball cricket, while others I'd shared the field with during the summer season. It was particularly nice to see everyone at Stretford Sports Village, where many of us normally meet to take part in the indoor cricket communities league, but this time for something completely different!

I was also very happy to help with the arrangements on the day, welcome the learners as they arrived and have a chat with a few familiar faces. It was lovely to see everyone in such good spirits and looking forward to the session.

I also had the opportunity to briefly share some of my own umpiring experiences from this season, including the support I've received from Cheshire ACO and the development opportunities available through the [ECB pathway](#). Having been fortunate enough to attend the [Hundred Rising programme at Headingley](#), I was keen to encourage others to explore what umpiring has to offer.

I'm still learning and developing myself, but that's one of the things I've enjoyed most about being involved in officiating. There is always something new to learn, and it's wonderful to be able to share those experiences with others.

In the days following the course, I caught up with a few of the learners over the phone and in person. It was genuinely lovely to hear how positive they were about the whole experience. They spoke very highly of Fiona and Stewart, and a few even mentioned that they would be interested in giving umpiring a try.

That was probably one of the most encouraging things to hear!

Of course, not everyone who completes an umpiring course will necessarily go on to officiate regularly, and that's absolutely fine. The knowledge gained can be just as valuable for

players, captains and people helping out at their clubs. But if some of those who attended decide to give umpiring a go, that would be a fantastic outcome.

As Cheshire ACO's BAME representative, I was particularly pleased to see so many people from different communities taking part. I've had quite a few conversations throughout the season with players and friends who have been curious about umpiring, and I think opportunities like this are a brilliant way of helping people take that first step.

I also understand that some learners benefited from financial support towards attending the course, which was very much appreciated. Making opportunities like this more accessible can make a real difference, and it's lovely to see Cheshire Cricket Board supporting that.

I really hope we can continue to organise more opportunities like this in the future, bringing together people from all backgrounds who share a love for cricket. Whether someone is an experienced player, completely new to officiating or simply curious about what an umpire does, everyone should feel welcome to come along, learn and give it a try.

Sometimes all it takes is a little encouragement and someone showing you where to begin.

A massive thank you once again to Rehaan, AJ, Fiona, Stewart, Cheshire Cricket Board and everyone else involved in organising and supporting the day. It was a fantastic initiative, and I'm really grateful to have been invited to be part of it.

And of course, well done to all 24 learners! I hope you enjoyed the course as much as I've enjoyed hearing about your experiences afterwards.

I'm really looking forward to seeing what comes next, and hopefully we'll see some familiar faces taking their first steps into umpiring next season.

Who knows, perhaps one day we'll even find ourselves standing together in the middle

Want to know more about officiating? Reach out to AJ at Cheshire Cricket on andrew.jackson@cheshirecricketboard.co.uk or [myself](#) Debayan Dey | Cheshire ACO BAME Representative





