

## **IHUA Press Release**

The conference call, held on Tuesday evening of this week, was the first significant contact between representatives of the Board of Hockey Ireland and the IHUA Executive Committee, to finally address the huge crisis facing umpiring in Ireland. A member of the IHL Working Group also joined the conference call. IHUA has continually raised the lack of progress in relation to the current crisis since 2013 and the need to fully implement the 4 year umpiring plan.

During these discussions on Tuesday, IHUA emphasised the need for all umpiring issues within the 4 year umpire plan to be implemented through a close working relationship with the Board of Hockey Ireland. The main focus of our discussion, on this occasion, was to make progress on the issue of umpire expenses for all Irish hockey competitions and for all IHUA members.

At the conclusion of the lengthy discussions, everyone agreed that good progress had been made and it was agreed that those representing the Board of Hockey Ireland would forward a proposal to IHUA in relation to the umpire expenses issue, for consideration by the IHUA Executive. IHUA then asked for and received an opportunity to consult our Executive, before committing to any proposal, as the IHUA representatives were not empowered to conclude an agreement.

It was agreed that IHUA would respond by 2.00pm the following day. Nothing was agreed beyond this time.

Immediately following the conference call IHUA received communication from Hockey Ireland titled: 'Proposal after Meeting' - this proposal related to umpire expenses for IHL panel umpires only: with the 4 year plan and umpire expenses for all cup competitions deferred to 1st October 2017 for discussion.

The IHUA Executive took the opportunity to discuss the proposal stemming from the meeting. As agreed the previous evening, the Chair of IHUA phoned the CEO of Hockey Ireland and verbally advised him that IHUA had difficulties accepting the proposal, as we had an absolute responsibility for the interests of all our members. During this phone call, as a gesture of good will and in light of the progress made, the Chair of IHUA suggested that IHUA would ask its members to re-consider their availability for appointments, to give the best possible opportunity for a resumption of all competitions, commencing on 30th September 2017, should agreement be reached in the interim.

Before a formal response was communicated to the Board of Hockey Ireland, an email was put into the public domain by the IHL working group. This communication has distorted the facts and is a breach of trust and does not accurately reflect what was agreed at the conference call.

IHUA has made significant efforts to have the issues facing umpiring in Ireland dealt with for a number of years and we are therefore most concerned about the unfair pressure that is being placed on our Association and its members, given the inaction in recent years.

The communication from the IHL working group, in the view of IHUA Executive, is an attempt to create division within both the membership of IHUA and the membership of Hockey Ireland, particularly the IHL teams.

It is the view of the IHUA that the conference call was a productive one and significant progress was made. However, the IHL Working Group's intervention was very damaging and the content of the communication may have harmed the trust that appeared to exist as a result of the conference call. Furthermore, it has the potential to reverse the good work done by IHUA representatives and the Board of Hockey Ireland to resolve matters.

Despite this, IHUA remains committed to seeking a resolution with the Board of Hockey Ireland and the resumption of hockey at national level.

IHUA would like to thank all involved in hockey for their patience while the issues are resolved. We would also like to thank all those who offered and continue to offer their support at this time while the various matters are dealt with.

**IHUA Executive Committee**

**21 September 2017**