



# NYUC Story Time

## Young Umpire Challenge 2015

### North RYUAG – what's it all about???

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Six years ago I'd just arrived at the same tournament you're sat at now.

Last month I got to umpire the first national final at the Olympic Park.

I came to the North Young Umpire Challenge in 2009 after I started umpiring for the younger years at my secondary school and passed my Level 1. The tournament was great, it was completely different to how I'd experienced umpiring before because everyone was so keen to help you improve and excel. I picked up a lot of advice from the coaching team and some pointers from my senior colleagues. It all proved valuable as I was nominated for the National finals as a wildcard and got picked to go through. It was a great weekend, we were exposed to a higher standard of hockey and were able to tap into the experience of umpires and coaches who were performing regularly at the highest levels of English hockey.

At the start of the 2010/11 season I passed an assessment to make it on the National Young Umpire's Promising List. This opened up a whole new set of tournaments that I could get involved in and early in 2011 I went to my first NYUPL tournament, the National Girl's Schools Championship Finals which featured the 8 best school teams at U16 and U18.

Since then I've gone on to umpire at Girl's Schools 5x, Futures Cup 4x, the National Girl's U18 Clubs Championship Finals 3x and Sainsbury's School Games. In the last two seasons I've umpired four U18 national finals, most recently we were lucky enough to be the first national competition at Lee Valley since it was moved after the Olympics.

Being part of the NYUPL also opened the door to England National Age Groups matches, since 2013 I've umpired 6 countries including Belgium and Spain. Last summer I was appointed as the English umpire at an U18 international tournament at Beeston and umpired the match between Holland and Germany.

This season I'd graduated from NYUPL on the newly formed National Pathway Develop Panel and within 3 weeks of the season I'd passed my Level 3 and was a full member of the NPUA. I now umpire regularly at National League.

I wouldn't have achieved any of the amazing highlights if it hadn't been for getting involved with the North Young Umpire Challenge. It put me on the North RYUAG's radar, and then on mine. I was able to attend performance hockey where my development was supported and encouraged by people who knew what they were talking about and really cared about it. If you're willing to put the effort and commitment in to your umpiring you'll get so much out of working with the RYUAG because the coaches are so keen and experienced at what they do. The opportunities to umpire exciting games and high levels of hockey are out there for the taking and getting involved at North will help you to perform at your best and achieve your goals.

Being a Young Umpire at North and National level opened some amazing doors and let me experience exciting, big tournaments but there's a limited time to get involved, once you're 23 you have to leave the panel, so what are you waiting for?!

If you have any questions or want to talk about anything to do with umpiring please don't hesitate to come grab me on the girls pitch during the day!

Jenny Ratcliffe