

MALCOLM EYES MOVE TO ECB UMPIRING RANKS

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Former England bowler Devon Malcolm, who retired from first class cricket in 2003 after a twenty-year, 304-match first class career, says he hopes to take up umpiring and is eyeing being "fast-tracked" on to the England and Wales Cricket Boards's (ECB) second-tier umpires Reserve List in 2011. Forty-six year old Malcolm, who was born in Jamaica, played forty Tests and ten One Day International for England from 1989-94, however, at the present time he does not appear to have been involved in umpiring at any significant level.

Following his retirement Malcolm set up and has operated a cricket supplies business. He is a qualified Level III player's coach and "still plays a bit of cricket", but rather than working up to the next coaching level found that his "heart was telling [him he'd] rather be an umpire". "That was five years ago" he says, however, according to him "there was an influx of ex-players on to the ECB's first-class umpiring panel [at the time and he was told he'd] be better off waiting a while longer".

Somewhat surprisingly given his stated interest in umpiring so long ago, Malcolm told Cricinfo's 'Page 2' section that he only plans to take his "first batch of umpiring exams [during the current northern] winter and [hopes he] can get fast-tracked onto the [ECB] reserve list [in 2011] if [he] stands in a few games [during the] summer [of 2010]".

Most of the umpires on the ECB's top-level Full List are former first class players, however, ECB Umpires' Manager Chris Kelly wrote in the Board's Association of Cricket Officials' March 2009 newsletter that all umpires, whether they be former players or not, will "enjoy the same conditions and opportunities" and that "for the first time" individuals will be able to "officiate at any level" provided they have the "ability and desire" (E-News 398-2111, 28 March 2009).

Last month former England player Martin Saggars, who retired from playing last September, was appointed to the ECB's Reserve List after what appears to have been a limited period of umpiring in the Kent League and a single match at the equivalent of county Second XI level. Saggars said on his retirement that his aim is to eventually stand at international level. 538-2757, 23 December 2009).

Asked by Cricinfo's Mark Pennell which umpire he would most like to emulate, Malcolm said that he liked how former England player John Hampshire controlled a game. Hampshire, who went on to stand in twenty-one Tests and 328 other first class games plus twenty One Day Internationals was, says Malcolm, "straightforward to you when umpiring a match [and was] in charge of the game without being over-officious". "As a cricketer there were certain umpires I didn't get on with", said Malcolm, for they were the ones who didn't communicate well, "so I'd try not to be that way".