

An Introduction to Cricket Umpiring.

Introduction.

This booklet is intended for the many Mums and Dads who umpire their children's cricket games, as well as those who wish to make a start at umpiring cricket. It does not cover the Laws of the game in any detail, but rather is intended to give an introduction to the basic techniques of how to prepare for a cricket match; what to do; and what not to do on a cricket field from an umpire's perspective. The more frequent "unusual incidents" where you might wonder "what happens now", are described.

Ideally, all those interested in umpiring cricket should attend a course on the Laws of Cricket run by an umpire's association. The "New South Wales Cricket Umpires' and Scorers Association" runs courses on the Laws and Technique of Umpiring twice a year and can, by arrangement, offer local courses on request. Better still JOIN the local umpires' association! The contact details for NSWCU&SA are below.

Umpiring gives an exciting new perspective on the game of Cricket and at junior levels allows a very real opportunity to encourage and foster good sportsmanship amongst those playing the game. While the laws and local regulations of the competition should be enforced with complete impartiality, it is just as important to provide an atmosphere of enjoyment for all participants of the game.

Therefore, poor sportsmanship from anyone whether players, coaches, managers or parents should not be tolerated. Sadly, some younger teams are "taught to sledge", for example by throwing out phrases such as "he has more edges than a 50 cent piece", "more swings than a playground" etc. While some may find this amusing it is in fact teaching young kids that sledging is okay.

Want to find out more?

To find the umpiring association nearest you, contact: -

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Chapter 1: Getting started.

PREPARATION FOR THE START OF THE MATCH AND PARTICULARLY THE NEW SEASON INVOLVES BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH THE LAWS OF CRICKET, AND JUST AS IMPORTANT, YOUR LOCAL ASSOCIATION'S RULES.

These, in many cases, will override the Laws of Cricket, e.g. many competitions rule any delivery landing off the pitch will be called a "No Ball"; the LBW Law may not apply in competitions for children under the age of 12; restrictions on the number of overs a child can bowl apply in many junior competitions, etc.

At junior level it is especially important that you keep the enjoyment and safety of the players uppermost in your priorities. Be familiar with safety regulations regarding protective gear, restrictions on bowlers and field placings. Be an example and a teacher of the Spirit of the game. Encourage the coaches, managers and parents to do the same.

Each association will generally run a "Rules Night" prior to the start of each season. Certainly at the very least, each team manager and coach should attend these meetings. If you plan to umpire on a regular basis you should also attend this meeting.

Practice.

If you take your kids to practice during the week, don't sit there and watch, why not get some practice yourself? Stand at the stumps or, if there is centre-field practice, at square leg. Get a feel for the routines that you will use during a game.

Working as a team.

The umpires and scorers together make up the control team for the match. When you go to a cricket match, watch the umpires carefully for a couple of overs. You will be surprised at how much they signal and communicate with each other. For example, commonly used signals in Australia include: -

- "2 to go" in an over: when the 4th ball of the over is dead the umpires will look to each other and signal with index and middle fingers extended that there are 2 balls remaining in the over, this is a check against miscounts
- one umpire may signal to his mate for help to decide if the wicket has been broken fairly in a run out;
- has the ball carried for the catch to the keeper;
- did the ball go for a 4 or 6?

It is helpful to get together and discuss how you can help each other and what signals you might use so the game runs more smoothly and everyone can enjoy the match even more.

Chapter 2: Match day.

Arrive at the ground in plenty of time to prepare and relax before the game starts. Try and find out who will be umpiring with you.

Find out who will be doing the scoring. It is a good idea to discuss with your fellow umpire and scorers such things as signals and when drinks breaks may be etc. Let the coaches know your attitudes to player behaviour.

Make sure the scorers are familiar with the signals you will use, and make sure they sit together. Let them know that they should acknowledge each signal you and your partner will give. See the section on signals later in the booklet.

Make sure the wickets are set up correctly and the area around the pitch is free of debris. Check where the boundaries are and where the boundary markers are.

What do I take onto the field?

1. Above all else make sure you take a friendly relaxed attitude!
After all, everyone is there to enjoy a game of cricket.
2. Take a counter, preferably one which will also count overs. Make sure that you know how to use it!
3. Take a notebook and pencil as you will almost certainly need to write down the number of overs each child has bowled. Write the over number beside their name.
4. A bowling marker.

Ready to play.

A few minutes before play is due to begin take the field with your partner.

1. Make a final check that the stumps are set up correctly. You should have already set them up earlier in the day.
2. Ensure there are no more than 11 members of the fielding side on the field.
3. If the game is to commence from your end, record who will bowl the first over, and take his or her cap if need be. You will need to find out if they are bowling right arm or left arm and whether they are bowling “over” or “around” the wicket.

“Over the wicket” means the bowler will deliver the ball from the side of the wicket where the bowling arm is closest to the stumps

“Around the wicket” means the bowler will deliver the ball from the side of the wicket where the bowling arm is furthest from the stumps.

You should tell the batsman who is about to face the delivery which side the bowler is going to bowl from. If he is too young to understand – Show Him!

4. **Give the striker his guard.**

This means you will tell the striker where he has placed his bat in relation to his stumps. At junior level, most batsmen will want ***“middle stump”***, or ***“centre stump”***. These two mean the same thing. The batsmen will place their bat on the popping crease, either edge on or face on to you at the bowler's end. You will then tell him to move the bat towards or away from him until the centre stump is

covered when viewed from a line between the centre stump at your end and the centre, or middle, stump at the batsmen's end. Occasionally older players will ask for "*middle and leg*" or "*two legs*". This means they want the bat positioned between the middle stump and their leg stump when viewed on line from the centre stump at your end.

The other main guard is "leg stump", which means the bat is directly in line with the leg stump.

When giving guard do it standing up to the stumps at your end.

When the striker has his bat in the position he wants, tell him "That's centre stump" or whatever. Use the same words he did, so if he asked "Middle stump please", when he has the bat in the right position, say "That's middle".

5. Make sure everyone, batsman, fielders and fellow umpire, are ready to start.
6. **Make sure the scorers are ready**. Generally you should gesture to them and the scorers will wave back.
7. Make sure you are comfortable with where you are standing. When at the bowlers end begin by standing far enough back so that the top of the bails line up with the popping crease. You can adjust this position according to your comfort but you must be able to see where the bowler's feet land and then, without moving your head, flick your eyes up to the striker and concentrate on what is happening at the far end of the pitch. At square leg stand about 15 to 20 metres from the pitch.
8. Call "Play" and let the fun begin.

Chapter 3: Take it ball by ball.

Good umpiring is all about enjoying what you are doing and good, relaxed concentration on the ball being played **right now**. Don't worry about what has happened on previous balls and certainly don't guess what might happen with future deliveries.

You will develop your own habits and routines, but here are some suggestions.

At the Bowler's End

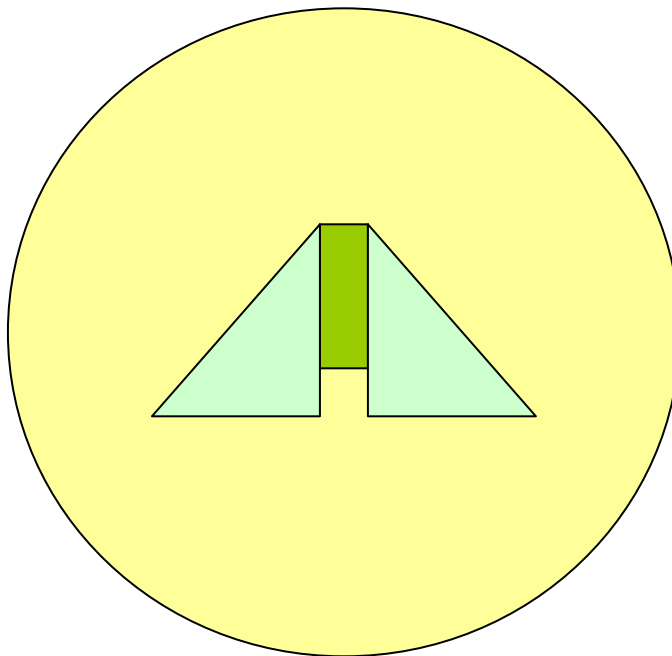
- As the bowler is running in, take in a breath and be ready to call "No Ball" if need be.

Whenever you need to make a call, "No Ball", "Wide", "Dead Ball", "Short Run", make sure it is loud enough for your fellow umpire and all the players to hear.

- When the bowler's front foot has landed, try not to move your head but rather flick your eyes up and "follow the ball" as it travels down the pitch to the striker and through to the wicketkeeper or into the field if the striker hits it. Do this even if you have called "No Ball" or "Wide", don't miss the action, remember the ball is not dead and things can happen!

Only when the ball is dead should you repeat the signals to the scorers.

- When the ball is played into the field, you may need to move into position so that you can judge a possible run out. Generally you will go to the same side to which the ball has been hit. This allows you to see the ball go into the hands of the fielder as they will usually stand behind the stumps to gather the return. This should give you a clear view of the ball or the fielder breaking the wicket.

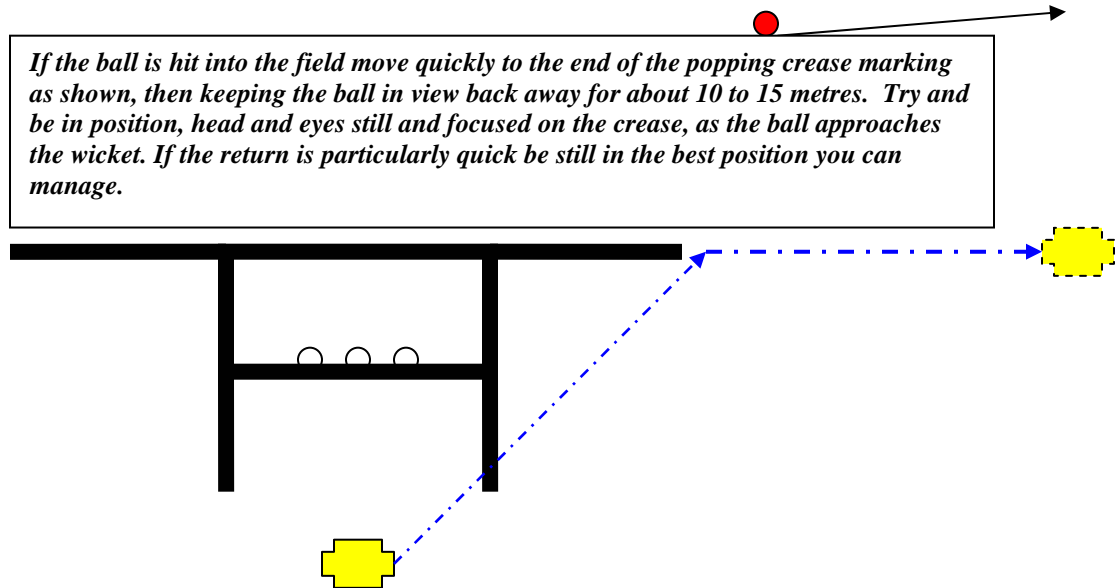


Strikers end.

If the ball is played into the light blue shaded "V", then consider going to the opposite side to the ball so you don't get in the way of the play.

Bowler's end Umpire

- Always keep your eye on the ball as you move away from behind the stumps. You will however, need to take a quick glance as the batsmen approaches the crease so that you can see him touchdown behind the crease with his bat or person and complete the run.
- Move into the field and finish in line with the crease about 10- 15 metres out from it so that you have a clear overview of the stumps and batsmen as he approaches. Focus on the crease; look for the bat / batsman to be grounded behind the crease; **“on the line is out”** use peripheral vision to observe the breaking of the wicket.



- *If you think you may get in the way of the play by moving to the same side as the ball, then go to the opposite side to the ball. You may then have to rely on your fellow umpire advising you as to whether or not the wicket has been broken correctly when a run out occurs.*
- If the ball is returned to your partner’s end, you should observe whether or not the wicket is broken correctly so that you may assist him if he requests.
- After the fourth ball of over becomes dead, you may wish to check with your partner using a prearranged signal that 2 balls remain in the over.
- When the ball becomes dead after the sixth ball of the over, call "Over".
- Give the bowler back his cap and move into position at square leg.

Some circumstances that may arise.

“No Ball”:- The ball is not “dead” on the call of “No Ball” so you must continue to concentrate on the play until it does become dead. When that happens then you repeat the ‘No Ball’ signal to the scorers.

A “No Ball” does not count as a ball in the over. A call of “No Ball” overrules a call of “Wide”. A 1 run “No Ball” penalty is scored at the instant of the call.

A batsman cannot be out from a “No Ball” in any way that the bowler can get credit for the wicket so that means *he cannot be out* “**Bowled**”, “**Caught**”, “**LBW**”, “**Hit Wicket**” or “**Stumped**”.

The batsmen however He can be out “Run Out”; “Handled the Ball”; “Obstructing the Field”; “Hit the Ball Twice”.

Unless the striker hits the ball all runs scored are recorded as “No Balls”.

“Wide Ball”:- A ball is “Wide” if the striker cannot reach it with a normal cricket shot from where he is standing AND the ball also would have also been out of his reach if he had stayed in a normal guard position. So that means a striker may move to the ball and bring it into reach and so stop a wide from happening, but he cannot “create a wide” by deliberately moving away from the ball.

A “Wide” does not count as a ball in the over. The ball is not “dead” on the call of “Wide”. A 1 run “Wide” penalty is scored at the instant of the call. All runs scored are recorded as “Wides”.

That means a striker can be theoretically out from a “Wide” in any of the usual ways but the ball can’t possibly be wide if the striker is “**Bowled**”, “**Caught**”, “**LBW**”, or “**Hit the Ball Twice**”!

Thus, the striker can be out **off a “Wide” “Stumped”, “Hit Wicket”, and both batsmen can be out “Run Out”; “Handled the Ball”; or “Obstructing the Field”.**

“Mankad”:- The bowler can only run out the non-striker before he has entered his delivery stride, that is, before his back foot lands when he would normally let go of the ball. If he takes the bails off after his back foot lands in the delivery stride with the non-striker backing up the decision is “Not Out”.

Batsmen stealing a run: - The Laws do not allow the batsmen to attempt to run as the bowler is running in. If the fielding side do not try and run the batsmen out call “Dead Ball” as soon as the batsmen cross. Check your local association rules as to what you should next do as this will probably vary from competition to competition.

Ball hitting a helmet on the ground: If a ball in play hits a fielder’s helmet on the ground it automatically becomes “Dead”. 5 runs are normally awarded for this misdemeanor but check your association rules as to what penalties may apply.

Ball hitting cap or clothing discarded or thrown away by a fieldman: - You need to be sure the cap etc. was deliberately thrown away i.e. not simply blown off as he runs, before you enforce any penalty that may apply in your competition. At junior level much better to explain why they shouldn’t leave gear lying around.

Having a rest at square leg?

So you think you'll be having a rest at square leg do you? Well, there is plenty to do.

- When the bowler delivers the ball you must ensure that his action is fair (throwing).
- You must ensure there are no more than two fieldsmen on the leg side behind the line of the popping crease (“Behind square leg”) at your end at the point of delivery. And this means any part of a third fielder.
- Always observe the ball going through to the keeper.
- You must also ensure that the striker does not break the wicket at his end as he plays at the ball or sets off for his first run. (Out, “Hit Wicket”)
- You must also be alert for the chance of a stumping, particularly if the wicket-keeper is standing up to the stumps.
- Remember, *if the striker moves forward, look for a stumping; if he moves back look for “hit wicket”*.
- Make sure the batsman grounds his bat or person correctly behind the popping crease to complete a run.
- If there is a possibility of a catch being taken, you may need to assist your partner in determining whether or not the ball has been fairly caught. However, your prime responsibility, particularly if the batsmen are running, is to determine whether or not the batsmen have crossed at the instant the catch is taken. If they have crossed, the incoming batsmen will go to the non-strikers end. Remember, under the Laws “level is not crossed”
- Likewise, always observe how the wicket is broken so you can help out your mate if needed.
- Generally be aware of what is going on at all times.
- After the sixth ball of the over becomes “Dead” begin to walk towards the bowler’s end as a help to your mate. Look for the bowler and go and get his cap; that will help keep the game moving.

Chapter 4: Some points to note.

Appeals: A batsman may “walk” if he knows he is out but an umpire cannot give a batsman out unless there is an appeal. The fielding side may appeal up until the bowler begins his run up for the next ball, or you call “Time” to start a scheduled break, e.g. drinks or tea. The call of “Over” does not invalidate an appeal.

Breaking the wicket fairly: For a decision of “Bowled”, “Run Out”, or “Stumped” the fielding side must “put the wicket down” fairly. This means at least one bail must be completely and permanently removed from the top of the stumps, or a stump is completely knocked out of the ground (not just leaning over). This can be done using the ball or, by using the arm of the hand holding the ball.

For “Hit Wicket”, the striker’s wicket is put down by his bat, his person (e.g. treading on the stumps) or clothing becoming detached (e.g. his helmet falls onto the stumps). If there are no bails being used, e.g. because they keep blowing off, then you only have to be satisfied that the wicket has been hit by the ball, bat, person etc.

Batsman protecting himself from injury: In general, if a batsman is taking action to prevent himself being injured he will not be given out. For example, if he puts a hand up to stop a ball hitting him in the face he cannot be out “Handled the Ball”, but, in the case of the striker if the hand is holding the bat he still risks being caught. If a batsman has *already* gained his ground (“is in his crease”) and then leaves it to avoid being hit by an incoming ball he cannot be “Run Out”.

Protective helmets worn by fielders: If a ball hit by a striker touches a helmet worn by a fielder, the striker cannot be out caught. Play continues unless the ball has *lodged* in the fielder’s helmet in which case the ball is automatically “dead”.

In much the same way if the ball rebounds directly from a helmet worn by a fielder, the batsmen cannot be run out unless the ball is touched by a fielder after it has hit the helmet. If the ball rebounds from a helmet worn by the wicketkeeper the striker cannot be stumped, but he may still be “Run Out” as above.

Substitutes:- A fielder may have a substitute if he is ill or injured during the match. This is any time after the toss until the end of the game and includes time between days play, e.g. during the week between a game played over two successive Saturdays. A substitute cannot bat, bowl, nor act as wicketkeeper or Captain.

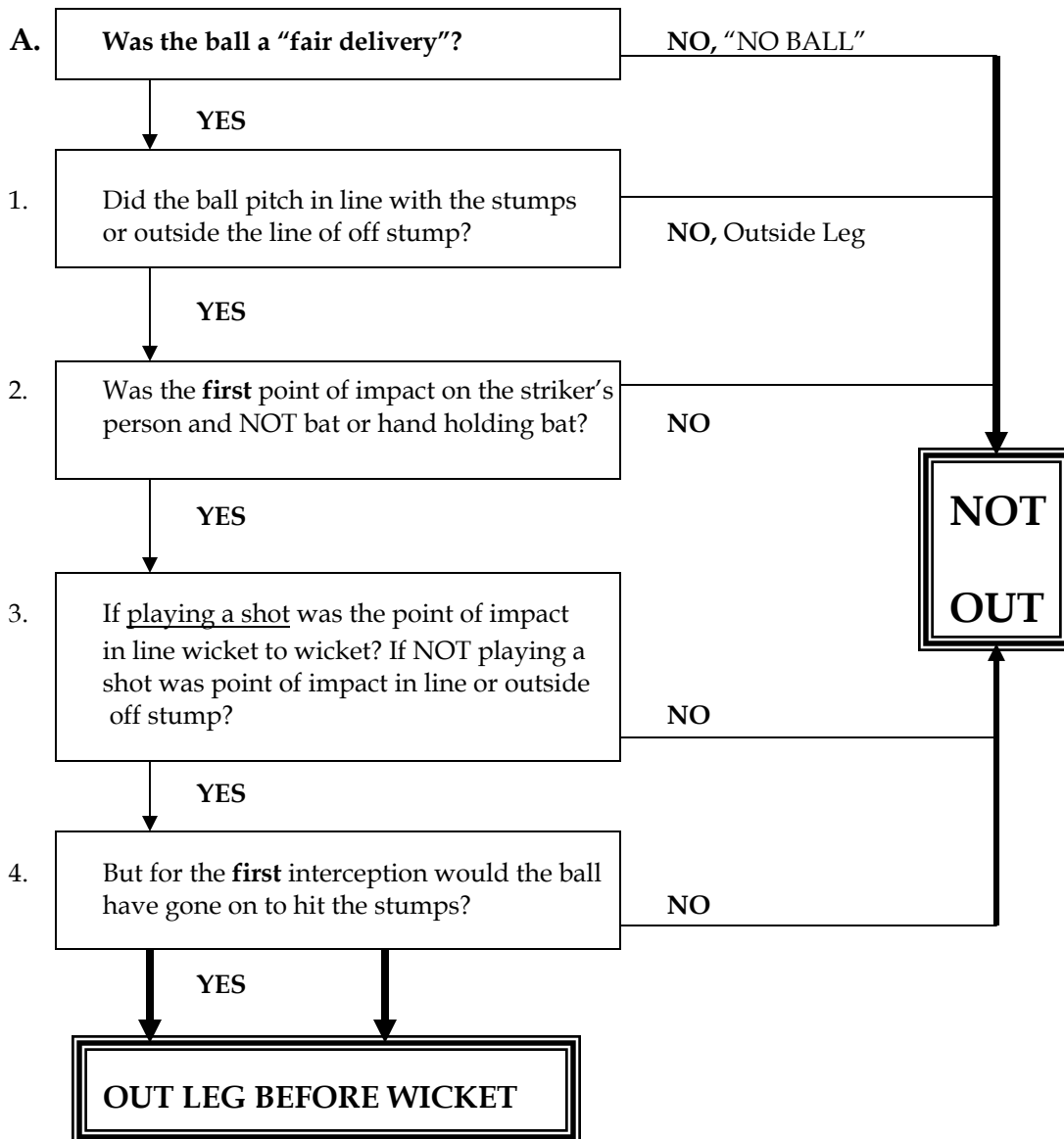
Runners: If a batsman is injured and needs a runner then the injured batsman must stay at the wicketkeeper’s end. If he is not the striker, he is out of the game and can only be out “Obstructing the Field” or “Handled the Ball” if he interferes with the fielding side. ***This means he cannot be run out if he is not the striker.***

If the injured batsman **is the striker**, ***he must stay behind the crease at the wicketkeeper’s end.*** If the wicket at that end is put down, first look to see if the injured striker is in his ground. If he is not, then he is out, regardless of where the other batsmen are. If he is in his ground look to see if the runner or non striker, as the case may be, is in or out of his ground.

LBW

ACCOUNT FOR ABOUT 60% OF ALL APPEALS!

TO DECIDE ON AN LBW APPEAL CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING.



Points to note: -

1. Only the first interception on the striker is considered.
2. If a full toss hits the striker, simply consider the ball has "pitched" on him rather than the pitch and the same questions then apply. You must then assume the path of the ball will be the same after impact as before. The behaviour of previous balls is not considered, just what you see before you.
3. The striker's stance at the moment the ball comes into play for that delivery determines the off side.
4. You cannot be out LBW if the ball pitches outside of leg stump.