

A Guide to the Common Laws of Cricket

Whilst the League, in conjunction with the Somerset Association of Cricket Officials, operates a very successful umpires panel for its top two divisions, it is realised that many teams have to find someone to take over the responsibility of umpiring, often a player.

It is likely that in local cricket the hardest positions to fill in any team are those of umpire and scorer.

All Clubs should be aware of the courses that are available through the Association for both umpires and scorers.

Go to www.somersetcricketboard.co.uk/courses for relevant details...

In order to assist those who might be called upon during the season, the Association has drafted a short précis of the most common Laws for use when players need to perform the function of umpire.

Leg Before Wicket

In order to give a batsman out for L.B.W. there are four factors that require a YES' answer.

- a) The ball must NOT be a 'no ball.'
- b) Did the ball pitch in line from wicket to wicket or did it pitch outside the off-stump?
- c) Was the interception part of the striker's person, dress or equipment and NOT the bat or hand(s) that hold the bat?
- d) Was the actual interception between wicket and wicket?
- e) Would the ball have hit the wicket?

It the answer to all these questions is YES then the striker is 'Out.'

- Note**
- i) If the ball pitches outside the leg-stump it cannot be considered for L.B.W.
 - ii) If no stroke is attempted the striker can be out L.B.W. even if the actual interception is outside the off-stump, provided the umpire is sure that the ball would have hit the wicket.

No Ball

- i) The back foot must land within and not touch the return line.
- ii) Some part of the front foot, whether grounded or raised, must be behind the popping line.
- iii) **Fast Bowler.** A fast ball that does not pitch and passes, or would have passed, above the waist of the batsman standing upright at the crease shall be termed a **no ball**. The umpire must call and signal 'No Ball' and warn the bowler that this is his first warning. The umpire will inform the captain of the fielding side. After a second similar full-pitched ball from the same bowler, the umpire shall again call and signal 'No Ball' and give the bowler a 'Final Warning' and the umpire will also advise the captain. If the same bowler bowls a further full-pitched ball above waist height, the umpire shall call and signal 'No Ball' and when the ball is dead, the umpire shall direct the captain to take the bowler off immediately and finish the over with another player. The bowler must not bowl again in that innings. **The umpire must report the incident to the League Secretary.**
- iv) **Slow Bowler.** The same procedure applies to a slow bowler and all the warnings are identical. However, in the case of the slow bowler the determining factor of height is '**above shoulder**' level.
- v) **Bouncer.** The umpire must call and signal 'No Ball' (without any warning being required), if any bowler – fast or slow – bounces a ball over the batsman's head when he is standing in his normal upright position.
- vi) **New Law.** The umpire must call and signal 'No Ball' if a bowler, who in his final delivery stride, knocks one or both bails from the stumps with his leg or arm. The batting side will be awarded one run and there will be an additional ball in the over. If the bowler does not release the ball, the umpire will call "dead ball."

Wide Ball

Operating the M.C.C. Law means that a ball should be called 'Wide' if it is out of reach of the striker standing in his normal position.

- Note**
- i) The return crease has nothing to do with the wide-ball.
 - ii) It is important that the umpire is **consistent** throughout the game. Calls should not be made just in the last few overs.

Run Out

Provided that the batsmen cross between the creases, it is he that is running towards the broken wicket who is given OUT. If a batsman leaves his ground in order to avoid being hit by a return throw he cannot be given Run-Out.

Leg Byes

These can only be scored if a genuine attempt was made to play the ball. If the umpire considers that no attempt was made to play the ball he will call 'Dead Ball' after the batsmen have completed any run they might attempt. This gives the fielding side a chance to run the batsman out.

Substitutes

A substitute fielder may field in any position with the one exception of that of wicket-keeper. The substitute may NOT bat or bowl or act as captain during the match. When a substitute runner is being used for an injured batsman, the injured striker must remain in his ground at all times. If he is out of his ground for any reason and the wicket is broken, he is 'Run-Out.' Any substitute runner must, if possible, have already batted. He must be dressed with similar external protective equipment as the injured batsman, although he need not wear a 'box.'

Umpires

It is important to note that any person selected to stand as umpire has the full powers of an appointed official and should use these powers as directed both in the M.C.C. Laws and the League Directives. Umpires are the sole judges of fair and unfair play, fitness of ground, weather and light. Should the umpires disagree, the state of things should continue.

The umpire will award the game against any side that refuses to play.

Weather, Ground and Light Conditions

- The umpires shall be the final judges of weather, ground and light conditions.
- While both umpires consider that conditions are suitable for play it will continue.
- When, in the opinion of the umpires, conditions become unsuitable then they must:-
Advise the batsmen at the wicket (batting captain's representative) and the fielding captain that conditions are unsuitable for play to continue and the players must leave the field.
- When, in the opinion of the **same** umpires, conditions become playable again they must inform the captains and play will resume.
- When, in the opinion of **both** umpires, the light conditions deteriorate to a level that is unsuitable for play the players must leave the field.
- When, in the opinion of the **same** umpires, the light level improves sufficiently for play to take place they must inform the captains and play will resume.
- There are three levels of suitability namely:-
 1. Level 1. Conditions are perfect - play will take place.
 2. Level 2. Conditions are not ideal for play, but the umpires **only** should decide that play continues or restarts.
 3. Level 3. The umpires consider that the conditions are unreasonable and/or dangerous and/or likely to cause serious injury – the umpires must suspend play immediately.

It is expected that all clubs should mark out the lines correctly before the start of play and that these lines must be re-marked at the tea interval.