

Playing Rules - Divisions One and Below

Divisions 1 to 10b

- Half of the matches are played using Format 1 and half of the matches using Format 2.

Regional Divisions

- All matches to be played using Format 2 (Limited Overs Matches)

Format 1 - “Timed” Matches (Weeks 6 to 14)

1. Duration

- a) Each match will start at 1.00pm unless otherwise indicated by the League. Tea, taken between innings, will last 20 minutes. At the discretion of the umpires, tea may be taken during any stoppage for rain.
- b) Matches will normally comprise 100 overs. The side batting first shall receive not more than 53 overs. Subject to rule c) below the side batting second shall receive the balance of the 100 overs not used by the side batting first. Any incomplete over in the first innings being counted as if a completed over.
- c) The side batting first is expected to complete its innings within 3 hours playing time. In the event of the side batting first receiving less than 53 overs in the time allotted, it shall have the option of batting on to receive some or all of the 53 overs allowed (but during this extra time only the batting side shall be entitled to pick up further bonus points). On the closure of the first innings the side batting first shall have the option of either using the balance of the 100 overs when fielding, or the number of overs representing 6 overs less than the number of overs bowled by the fielding side at the end of the allotted time of 3 hours. The side batting first must communicate its decision to the umpires during the interval between the innings.

All time lost due to drinks intervals (which must have been agreed before the toss for innings) or late starting of the match, or late resumption after any interval, or any other unavoidable cause including injury to a player, shall be aggregated and taken into consideration in calculating the time allowed for completion of an innings.

2. Interference by Weather

- i) In the event of a delayed start or any break in the first innings for bad weather, the length of the match will be reduced at a rate of two overs for each full seven minutes of play lost, with the recalculated total to be divided between the two sides such that the side batting first receives six overs (Regional Divisions: four overs) more than the side batting second (subject to the laws governing a declaration).
- ii) In the event of stoppages, the time available for completion of the first innings shall be reduced by half the total time lost.
- iii) Any disruptions to play in the second innings shall result in one over being deducted for each full 3½ minutes lost. If there is more than one stoppage in either innings, the time lost is to be accumulated and the number of overs reduced accordingly.

- iv) In all completed games which are subject to interruption, the side batting first must have received a minimum of 40 overs, subject to the laws governing a declaration, to constitute a league match.
- v) Where panel umpires are appointed, in the event of any dispute between the captains over the fitness of the ground for play up to one hour before the scheduled start, the umpires shall be the sole arbiters as to whether the ground is fit for play, both before and after the toss.
In Divisions 1 - 2b, where the fitness of the ground is in doubt more than 3½ hours before the scheduled start time, the home club will make every endeavour to obtain agreement to any proposed cancellation from at least one of the appointed umpires or a nominated local deputy.
- vi) Prior to the toss the home side is the ground authority for all games in Divisions 3a and below and is the sole arbiter of whether or not the ground is fit for play.

After the toss the following shall apply as regards fitness of ground and weather:

- Where there are two non-playing umpires they shall be the sole arbiters
- Where there is one non-playing umpire then in the event of disagreement his decision shall prevail
- Where there are no non-playing umpires the responsibility for determining the suitability of the conditions shall be with the two captains. They are to act having proper regard for their responsibilities for the safety and welfare of all participants. In the event that the two captains are unable to reach agreement a non-playing committee member of the home club shall be responsible for the decision. If no non-playing committee member is available then play will be suspended. Having suspended play it shall only be resumed with the consent of both captains.

The conditions are to be regarded as unsuitable if there is a foreseeable risk of injury to any participant or where the conditions are such that it would be unreasonable to continue. Where the ground is so wet that the movement of the fielders or batsmen is restricted, or where there is surface water on the square, such conditions are to be regarded as unsuitable.

For the avoidance of doubt: A game should be considered abandoned if the start is delayed by greater than 97 minutes.

Note: If the tea interval takes place during a stoppage for bad weather in the first innings, 20 minutes will be deducted from the total time lost and the total number of overs to be bowled and the time limits will be recalculated accordingly. If the change of innings takes place during a stoppage for bad weather, no additional adjustments shall be made to the number of overs to be received by the team batting second after any recalculation of the number of overs to be received.

3. Points system

The league tables will be produced on an aggregate points basis (except in the regional divisions where the tables will be produced on an average points basis). Points will be awarded as follows:

Win 30 points

Draw or loss Bonus points

Tie 20 points (when scores finish level with the team batting second 'all out', i.e. has completed its innings)

Cancelled and abandoned . . . 10 points or bonus points, whichever is greater.

Note: A minimum of 40 overs must be bowled in the first innings (unless the innings is completed or subject to a declaration) to constitute a league match, after which any abandoned game is deemed a draw, resulting in each side receiving 10 points or bonus points, whichever is the greater. However, if the abandonment comes after 26 overs have been bowled in the second innings, only bonus points earned up to the time of abandonment shall be awarded.

Batting Bonus Points

(Batting bonus points are doubled for side batting first. Also for the side batting second having lost the toss.)

140 runs - 1 point; 155 runs - 2 points; 170 runs - 3 points;

185 runs - 4 points; 200 runs - 5 points

Bowling Bonus Points

Bowling first - having won the toss, 0-5 wkts - 0 points, then 1 point per wicket thereafter

- having lost the toss, 1 point per wicket taken.

Bowling second - 1 point per wicket taken.

If any side fails to fulfil a fixture, the opposing team shall be awarded the full 30 points available for that fixture.

Any side which fails to fulfil a fixture shall additionally be deducted 10 points from its points total in the division in which it plays.

4. Number of Players

Both teams are required to field a minimum of 8 players during both innings to constitute a league match. In matches where panel umpires are appointed the panel umpires shall decide on the start of the game or a concession should there be fewer than 8 players present at the start time. In all other matches where both captains agree, a match may start, even though the batting side has less than 8 players at the ground, providing the missing players, whose names must be on the team sheet, are expected to arrive. Any team unable to field a minimum of 8 players shall be deemed not to have fulfilled the fixture. Any delay to the start of the match arising from this rule shall result in a reduction of overs calculated in the same way as match rule 2i) while also subject to the minimum overs requirement of rule 2ii). There will be a general 'allowance' that games may start up to 15 minutes after the scheduled start time without agreement to take account of traffic or similar problems and to get a full game in those circumstances.

5. Fast Bowling Directive

The ECB fast bowling directive (published in the league handbook) shall apply to all league games and failure to comply shall be construed as playing an ineligible player and will be dealt with accordingly under the powers given to the league under rule 12 of the Constitution.

6. Penalty Runs

Penalty runs, as prescribed in rule 42 of "The Laws of Cricket", shall only be awarded in matches in Divisions 1 - 2b. Note: This also covers penalty runs awarded under Laws 2.6 and 18.5; but not Law 41.2 and 41.3 which shall apply in all divisions.

7. Cricket Balls

The make and specification of cricket balls to be used in all league matches will be determined by the Executive Committee and no other ball shall be used (currently the superior quality ball in Divisions 1-3b - see inside back cover). A new ball shall be used from the start of the first innings in all matches and from the start of the second innings in all matches unless both captains agree to carry on with the old ball in accordance with the laws of cricket. Should the old ball be used then the side bowling second shall have the option of taking the new ball at any time up to the delivery of the first ball of the last 20 overs. In a rain affected match, if the teams are off the field at the start of the last 20 overs and the new ball has not been taken before the interruption to play when the umpires call 'time', it may not subsequently be taken and the match shall finish with the old ball.

Note: All new and spare balls to be provided by the home team

8. Umpires and Scorers

a) Each club with a team playing in Divisions 1 to 6b is required to register with the League every umpire that it considers to be attached to the club whether that umpire has been supplied to the League Umpires Panels or will be standing in a match below Division 2b.

b) Divisions 1 - 2b: Umpires for matches will be appointed from a panel by an appropriate sub-committee.

c) In Divisions 3 to 6b inclusive each club is required to register with the League a minimum of one umpire who meets one of the following requirements:

- Attended and passed the ECB ACO training course at Level 1 or equivalent.
- Received dispensation from the League on the grounds that the club has a long-standing experienced umpire. A League sub-committee will review and agree any dispensation on this basis.

It is expected that the umpire(s) so registered will stand in all matches other than, exceptionally, in the case of holidays or illness. Failure to provide a registered umpire will result in a 5 point penalty for each match.

d) In Divisions 1-2b each club is required to register with the League a minimum of one scorer who has

- Attended and passed the ACO scorer's training course level one or equivalent or

- Received dispensation from the League on the grounds that the club has a long-standing and experienced scorer. A League sub-committee will agree any dispensation on this basis

It is expected that the scorer(s) so registered will be appointed in all matches other than, exceptionally, in the case of holidays or illness. Failure to provide a competent scorer for the duration of matches in Divisions 1-2b will result in a 5 point penalty

- e) The penalty of 5 points will not be applied as follows:
- In (c) where the club has supplied to the Umpires Panel at least as many umpires as it has teams playing in Divisions 6B and above, and
 - In (d) where the registered scorer is also a registered umpire and that umpire is a member of the Umpires Panel
- f) It is expected that in cases where a club is able to claim exemption from the penalty of 5 points that it will make every effort to provide, in all matches, an umpire or scorer as applicable for the benefit of the participants.
- g) It is the responsibility of every club to ensure that its umpires and scorers are correctly registered on the League website and a claim for exemption under 8(e) will be determined from those registration details

9. Covers

Covering of pitches and bowlers' run-ups shall be allowed after play has commenced. Where partial covers only are available, bowlers' run-ups shall be covered up to a distance not exceeding five feet in front of the popping crease.

10. Pitches

Grounds on which matches are to be played shall be listed in the handbook. Alternative grounds may be used, providing the visiting team and umpires are advised of the change before 8pm on the Thursday prior to the date of the match, and formal acknowledgement of the change obtained from an officer of the opposing club and the umpires (where appropriate).

No game shall be switched to a ground (or pitch) other than the one on which the game is scheduled and/or is normally used by the home team, after 8pm on the Thursday prior to the date of the match. Exceptional circumstances may apply, if a late change of ground is approved by the League Executive Committee.

Artificial pitches may only be used in games in Divisions 10,10a and the Regional Divisions.

11. Bowling Restrictions

In Divisions 1-10b no bowler shall bowl more than 15 overs in any innings and in the Regional divisions this shall be reduced to 12 overs.

12. Teas

No visiting team shall be charged by the home team more than £40.00 for teas.

Format 2 – Limited Overs Matches

(Weeks 1 to 5 & 15 to 18, except Regional Divisions)

1. Duration

- a) Each match will start at 1.00pm unless otherwise indicated by the league. Tea, taken between innings, will last for 20 minutes. At the discretion of the umpires, tea may be taken during any stoppage for rain.
- b) Matches will normally comprise 100 overs. Both sides shall receive not more than 50 overs. There will be no opportunity for the side batting first to declare.
- c) Both sides are expected to complete their innings within 3 hours. After this time has elapsed only the batting side shall be entitled to pick up further bonus points. All time lost due to drinks intervals (which must have been agreed before the toss) or late starting of the match, or late resumption after any interval, or any other unavoidable cause including injury to a player, shall be aggregated and taken into consideration in calculating the time allowed for completion of an innings

Regional Divisions (All Matches)

- d) Matches will normally comprise 80 overs. Both sides shall receive not more than 40 overs. There will be no opportunity for the side batting first to declare. Both sides are expected to complete their innings within 2h 20mins. After this time has elapsed only the batting side shall be entitled to pick up further bonus points.

2. Interference by Weather

- a) In the event of a delayed start or any break in the first innings for bad weather, the length of the match will be reduced at a rate of one over per innings for each full seven minutes of play lost. If there are no further disruptions then the winner of the match will be the team scoring the most runs.
- b) Any disruptions to play in the second innings shall result in one over being deducted for each full 3 ½ minutes lost. The winner of the match will be the team scoring the higher number of runs per over (as calculated to two decimal places). If either side was dismissed before receiving the full allocation of overs the runs per over calculation shall be based on the number of overs the side was entitled to receive (either at the commencement of its innings or as reduced due to subsequent interruptions to play).
- c) Both sides must receive a minimum of 20 overs to constitute a league match.
- d) Play must commence within 2 hours of the scheduled start time to constitute a league game.
- e) Where panel umpires are appointed, in the event of any dispute between the captains over the fitness of the ground for play up to one hour before the scheduled start, the umpires shall be the sole arbiters as to whether the ground is fit for play, both before and after the toss. In Divisions 1,2a & 2b, where the fitness of the ground is in doubt more than 3½ hours before the scheduled start time, the home club will make every endeavour to obtain agreement to any proposed cancellation from at least one of the appointed umpires or a nominated local deputy.

- f) Prior to the toss the home side is the ground authority for all games in Divisions 3a to the Regional Divisions and is the sole arbiter of whether or not the ground is fit for play.

After the toss the following shall apply as regards fitness of ground and weather:

- Where there are two non-playing umpires they shall be the sole arbiters
- Where there is one non-playing umpire then in the event of disagreement his decision shall prevail.
- Where there are no non-playing umpires the responsibility for determining the suitability of the conditions shall be with the two captains. They are to act having proper regard for their responsibilities for the safety and welfare of all participants. In the event that the two captains are unable to reach agreement a non-playing committee member of the home club shall be responsible for the decision. If no non-playing committee member is available then play will be suspended. Having suspended play it shall only be resumed with the consent of both captains.

The conditions are to be regarded as unsuitable if there is a foreseeable risk of injury to any participant or where the conditions are such that it would be unreasonable to continue. Where the ground is so wet that the movement of the fielders or batsmen is restricted, or where there is surface water on the square, such conditions are to be regarded as unsuitable.

Note: If the tea interval takes place during a stoppage for bad weather in the first innings, 20 minutes will be deducted from the total time lost and the total number of overs to be bowled and the time limits will be recalculated accordingly. If the change of innings takes place during a stoppage for bad weather, no additional adjustments shall be made to the number of overs to be received by the team batting second after any recalculation of the number of overs to be received.

3. Points System

The league tables will be produced on an aggregate points basis (except in the regional divisions where the tables will be produced on an average points basis). Points will be awarded as follows:

Win	30 points
Tie	20 points
Loss	Bonus Points
Draw	Draws are not possible in this format of the game.
Abandoned	10 points or bonus points, whichever is the greater.

Batting Bonus Points

- Divisions 1-10b: 1 point for every 15 runs scored from 110 to 245
(i.e. a maximum of 10 points)
- Regional Divisions: 1 point for every 15 runs scored from 80 to 215
(i.e. a maximum of 10 points)

Bowling Bonus Points

All Divisions: 1 point for every wicket taken.

If a team takes all the available wickets of a team playing with less than 11 players they shall receive 10 bowling bonus points.

Except in the Regional Divisions if any side fails to fulfil a fixture, the opposing team shall be awarded the full 30 points available for that fixture.

Any side which fails to fulfil a fixture shall additionally be deducted 10 points from its points total in the division in which it plays.

4. Number of Players

Both teams are required to field a minimum of 8 players during both innings to constitute a league match. In matches where panel umpires are appointed the panel umpires shall decide on the start of the game or a concession should there be fewer than 8 players present at the start time. In all other matches where both captains agree, a match may start, even though the batting side has less than 8 players at the ground, providing the missing players, whose names must be on the team sheet, are expected to arrive. Any team unable to field a minimum of 8 players shall be deemed not to have fulfilled the fixture. Any delay to the start of the match arising from this rule shall result in a reduction of overs calculated in the same way as match rule 2 a) while also subject to the minimum overs requirement of rule 2 c). There will be a general 'allowance' that games may start up to 15 minutes after the scheduled start time without agreement to take account of traffic or similar problems and to get a full game in those circumstances.

5. Fast Bowling Directive

The ECB fast bowling directive (published in the league handbook) shall apply to all league games and failure to comply shall be construed as playing an ineligible player and will be dealt with accordingly under the powers given to the league under rule 12 of the Constitution.

6. Penalty Runs

Penalty runs, as prescribed in rule 42 of "The Laws of Cricket", shall only be awarded in matches in Divisions 1 - 2b. Note: This also covers penalty runs awarded under Laws 2.6 and 18.5; but not Law 41.2 and 41.3 which shall apply in all divisions.

7. Cricket Balls

The make and specification of cricket balls to be used in all league matches will be determined by the Executive Committee and no other ball shall be used (currently the superior quality ball in Divisions 1-3b - see inside back cover). A new ball shall be used from the start of both innings in all matches. Under no circumstances should the ball used in the first innings be used at the start of the second innings.

Note: All new and spare balls to be provided by the home team.

8. Umpires and Scorers

As per Format 1.

9. Covers

Covering of pitches and bowlers' run-ups shall be allowed after play has commenced. Where partial covers only are available, bowlers' run-ups shall be covered up to a distance not exceeding five feet in front of the popping crease.

10. Pitches

Grounds on which matches are to be played shall be listed in the handbook. Alternative grounds may be used, providing the visiting team and umpires are advised of the change before 8pm on the Thursday prior to the date of the match, and formal acknowledgement of the change obtained from an officer of the opposing club and the umpires (where appropriate).

No game shall be switched to a ground (or pitch) other than the one on which the game is scheduled and/or is normally used by the home team, after 8pm on the Thursday prior to the date of the match. Exceptional circumstances may apply, if a late change of ground is approved by the League Executive Committee.

Artificial pitches may be only be used in games in Divisions 10a,10b and the Regional Divisions.

11. Number of Overs Per Bowler

- a) In a 50 overs match, no bowler may bowl more than 10 overs in an innings. In a 40 overs match, no bowler may bowl more than 8 overs in an innings.
- b) In a match of less than 50 overs (40 overs in the Regional Divisions) no bowler may bowl more than one fifth of the total number of overs available. Where the total number of overs are not divisible by 5, an additional over shall be allowed to the minimum number of bowlers necessary to make up the balance. (E.g. in an innings of 37 overs, a maximum of 2 bowlers may bowl 8 overs)
- c) In the event that a reduction in overs results in one or more bowlers having exceeded the newly calculated maximum then the umpires shall calculate the overs allowed for the remaining bowlers. A bowler who has exceeded the new maximum shall be permitted to complete an incomplete over. (E.g. Match reduced to 33 overs, one bowler has bowled 10 – 3 bowlers may bowl a maximum of 6 overs and 1 bowler may bowl a maximum of 5.
- d) A part over shall count as a full over only insofar as each bowler's limit is concerned.

12. Restriction on the Placement of Fielders

- a) Fielding restrictions shall apply in Divisions 1 to 6b inclusive. There shall be no restriction of fielders on Divisions 7a and below
- b) Two semi-circles shall be drawn on the field of play. The semi-circles shall have as their centre the middle stump at either end of the pitch. The radius of each of the semi-circles shall be 30 yards. The ends of each semi-circle shall be joined to the other by a straight line drawn on the same side of the pitch.
- c) As the bowler starts their run up, only five players may be permitted outside the line described in b) at all times.

- d) In the event of an infringement of the fielding restrictions in c) the Umpire at the strikers end shall call and signal "No Ball".
- e) If in the opinion of either batsman the Striker's End Umpire fails to call and signal No Ball when the fielding restrictions have been breached then immediately the ball becomes dead, either batsman may draw the matter to the attention of either umpire. If the Striker's End Umpire is able to verify the breach, he shall call and signal "No-Ball". If the Striker's End Umpire is unable to verify the breach then he shall confirm that the events of the delivery shall be unchanged.

13. No Ball

- a) Underarm bowling is not permitted. If a bowler bowls a ball underarm the umpire shall call and signal "No Ball"
- b) The penalty under Law 24.12 for a "No Ball" will be 1 run.
- c) There will be no "free hits" for front foot no balls.

14. Wide Ball

In Divisions 7a and below the umpires and captains shall ensure that consistency is achieved across both innings for determining what constitutes a wide delivery. The Division of the match should be taken into consideration when deciding what should constitute a wide delivery.

In Divisions 1 to 6b inclusive Law 25 shall apply with the following addition:

- a) Umpires are instructed to apply a strict and consistent interpretation in regard to this Law in order to prevent negative bowling wide of the wicket.
- b) A leg side wide shall be called if, irrespective of where the ball pitches, it passes outside of the line of the striker standing in his normal guard position and the leg stump. A wide shall not be called if the striker moves towards the off-side and the ball would have struck any part of his person had he not moved.
- c) A ball that passes between the Striker and the leg stump shall not be judged a wide.
- d) An additional crease marking shall be made 17 inches inside and parallel with each return crease, joining the Popping and Bowling creases. Please note that the crease is the inside edges of both these new markings and the Return Crease markings.

An off-side wide shall be called if, in the umpire's opinion, the delivery has passed between the 17 inch line and the Return crease and the Striker has not brought it within reach of a scoring stroke.

15. The Bowling of Fast Short Pitched Balls (Bouncer)

Law 42.6(a) (i) shall be replaced with: A bowler shall be limited to one fast short pitched ball per over. The umpire at the bowler's end will make it clear to both the bowler and the batsmen at the wicket when such a delivery within this limit is bowled. This ruling shall apply even though the striker has made contact with the ball with his bat, person or equipment. A short pitched ball is defined as one that passes or would have passed over shoulder height of the Striker standing upright at the crease. It is unfair if the limit is exceeded and the umpire shall call and signal No Ball on each such occasion. In addition, the umpires will adopt the procedures of law 42.7.