

Safety Measures for Helmets within Recreational Cricket

The ECB has recently announced new helmet safety measures, which are being introduced with a view to reducing the risk of head and facial injuries within the game. The purpose of this brief note is to assist Leagues and Clubs at the recreational level to understand the key elements of these changes and what they mean.

Players over the age of 18

The ECB strongly recommends that all adult recreational cricketers should wear helmets for certain activities, preferably which meet the most recent British Safety Standard (see below). This recommendation applies to batting against all types of bowling, wicket-keepers standing up to the wicket (who may as an alternative wear face protectors) and fielders fielding closer than eight yards from the batsman's middle stump, except behind the wicket on the off side.

Under 18s

The position in relation to Under 18s currently remains unchanged, and is governed by the 'ECB Guidance on the Wearing of Cricket Helmets by Young Players' (www.ecb.co.uk/youngplayershelmetguidance). In essence, batsmen and wicket-keepers standing up to the stumps must wear head protection when playing or practising. That Guidance should be referred to in full for the position in relation to Under 18s.

British Safety Standard

The latest British Safety Standard is BS7928:2013 (for both adults and juniors). The full list of helmets meeting this standard is available at www.ecb.co.uk/helmets. For wicket-keeping face protectors the relevant British Safety Standard is BS7929-2:2009 (again, for both adults and juniors).

The ECB understands that there is currently no specific women's helmet and as a consequence no specific standard for women's cricket helmets. As the size of the standard women's cricket ball is between the standard men and junior balls, it is recommended that women use helmets that have been tested against both the men's and junior sized ball, or at least against the junior size ball (as that could potentially get through the gap above the face guard on a men's helmet).

What do Leagues and Clubs need to do?

Whilst it is strongly recommended that all adult recreational cricketers wear helmets in the on-field circumstances detailed above, it is not mandatory for them to do so. For the avoidance of doubt, Leagues or Clubs do not need to go above and beyond the ECB's recommendation by forcing their cricketers to wear helmets.

However, Leagues and Clubs in recreational cricket should ensure that their cricketers are made aware of the ECB's above recommendation in relation to helmets, including the need to check that any newly purchased helmets meet the latest British Safety Standard. The ECB recommends that Leagues and Clubs bring the link above i.e. (www.ecb.co.uk/helmets) to the attention of their cricketers and encourage all cricketers to carefully consider their own health and safety regarding helmet use.

Leagues and Clubs should always ensure that they have adequate public liability insurance.

ECB Safety Guidance on the Wearing of Cricket Helmets by Young Players

In February 2015 the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) issued updated safety guidance on the wearing of helmets by young players up to the age of 18. In brief, the guidance recommends that:

- helmets with a faceguard or grille must be worn when batting against a hard cricket ball in matches and in practice sessions
- young players should regard a helmet with a faceguard as a normal item of protective equipment when batting, together with pads, gloves and, for boys, an abdominal protector (box)
- young wicket keepers must wear a helmet with a faceguard, or a wicketkeeper face protector when standing up to the stumps.

With the assistance of schools, cricket clubs and leagues, the wearing of helmets by young players is now standard practice in cricket throughout England and Wales. Helmets are widely available and are covered by an updated British Standard (BS7928:2013). A face protector represents an alternative head protection system for young wicket keepers. Wicketkeeper Face Protectors are covered by a new British Standard (BS 7928 – 2 :2009). The ECB strongly recommends that wherever possible junior players use head protectors that have been tested against junior sized cricket balls.

Parental or guardian written consent allowing a young player not to wear a helmet should not be accepted in any form of cricket.

This guidance applies to all players up to the age of 18, both in adult cricket and in all junior cricket played with a hard cricket ball.

The guidance also applies during all practice sessions. Any individual taking responsibility for players should take all reasonable steps to ensure that this guidance is followed at all times.

The ECB asks that the guidance is communicated to the parents or guardians of all young players through clubs and schools, and that young players are not allowed to bat or stand up to the stumps when keeping wicket against a hard ball without wearing appropriate protection.

Fielding Regulations

The ECB has regulations covering the minimum fielding distances for young players in all matches where a hard ball is used:

- No young player in the Under 15 age group or younger shall be allowed to field closer than 8 yards (7.3 metres) from the batsman's position on the popping crease on a middle stump line, except behind the wicket on the off side, until the batsman has played at the ball.
- For players in the Under 13 age group and below the distance is 11 yards (10 metres).
- These minimum distances apply even if the player is wearing a helmet.
- Should a young player in these age groups come within the restricted distance the umpire must stop the game immediately and instruct the fielder to move back.
- In addition any young player in the Under 16 to Under 18 age groups, who has not reached the age of 18, must wear a helmet and, for boys, an abdominal protector (box) when fielding within 8 yards (7.3 metres) from the batsman's position on the popping crease on a middle stump line, except behind the wicket on the off side. Players should wear appropriate protective equipment whenever they are fielding in a position where they feel at risk.
- These fielding regulations are applicable to all cricket in England and Wales. Age groups are based on the age of the player at midnight on 31st August in the year preceding the current season.

ECB Fast Bowling Match Directives

Age	Max. overs per spell	Max. overs per day
Up to U13	5	10
U14, U15	6	12
U16, U17, U18, U19	7	18

For the purpose of these Directives a fast bowler is defined as a bowler to whom a wicket keeper in the same age group would in normal circumstances stand back to take the ball.

Having completed a spell the bowler cannot bowl again, from either end, until the equivalent number of overs to the length of his* spell have been bowled from the same end. A bowler can change ends without ending his current spell provided that he bowls the next over that he legally can from the other end. If this does not happen his spell is deemed to be concluded. If play is interrupted, for any reason, for less than 40 minutes any spell in progress at the time of the interruption can be continued after the interruption up to the maximum number of overs per spell for the appropriate age group. If the spell is not continued after the interruption the bowler cannot bowl again, from either end, until the equivalent number of overs to the length of his spell before the interruption have been bowled from the same end. If the interruption is of 40 minutes or more, whether scheduled or not, the bowler can commence a new spell immediately.

In matches of 20 overs or less per team where the competition regulations only allow bowlers to bowl less than or equal to the number of overs specified as the maximum in a spell in the Directives the provisions requiring an equivalent number of overs from the same end to have elapsed before a subsequent spell can commence shall not apply (e.g. in any age group competition where a maximum of 4 overs per bowler is allowed these may be bowled at any time in the innings irrespective of the number of spells bowled).

Once a bowler covered by these Directives has bowled in a match he cannot exceed the maximum number overs per day for his age group even if he subsequently bowls spin. He can exceed the maximum overs per spell if bowling spin, but cannot then revert to bowling fast until an equivalent number of overs to the length of his spell have been bowled from the same end.

If he bowls spin without exceeding the maximum number of overs in a spell the maximum will apply as soon as he reverts to bowling fast. Captains, Team Managers and Umpires are asked to ensure that these Directives are followed at all times.

For guidance it is recommended that in any 7 day period a fast bowler should not bowl more than 4 days in that period and for a maximum of 2 days in a row.

Age groups are based on the age of the player at midnight on 31st August in the year preceding the current season.

**Any reference to he/his should be interpreted to include she/her.*



Ground Weather and Light (GW&L) – Umpires’ Guide

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This guide represents the key issues and actions umpires should consider in reviewing GW&L issues caused by weather conditions (other than lightning).

In order for play to start, continue or resume, **both** umpires (subject to point 9 below) should **agree**, at all times, that conditions do not present **an actual and foreseeable risk of injury to any player or umpire**. To help to establish this, the following questions should be considered by both umpires. **The state of the game, or the views of either team, should have no bearing on the answers.**

1. Have you carried out an inspection of the whole playing area, at no faster than at a reasonable walking pace, including the area immediately beyond the boundary over which fielders may need to pass as they endeavour to field or catch the ball?
2. Do the bowlers have reasonable footholds – i.e. are they able to bowl without slipping – this must include the whole of their delivery, from where they begin their run up, to the point they have regained control of their movement after delivery of the ball?
3. Do all of the fielders have the power of free movement around the ground – can they can move, turn and run at broadly full pace, without slipping?
4. Do the batsmen have the ability to play their shots and run freely between the wickets without slipping, both when they set off and in the action of turning?
5. Are you satisfied that there is no surface water and no standing water (water visible around the feet when pressed into the ground) in the playing area within 30 yards of the pitch, or on the square, or, if further away, that would be so slippery as to potentially constitute a danger?
6. In your opinion is there sufficiently good visibility to enable you to conclude that you, the batsmen, and fielders will be able to see the ball (taking into account its pace) clearly enough to be safe?
7. Are you satisfied that after pitching the ball does not bounce unpredictably or steeply or go through the surface of the pitch in a way that poses a danger to the striker or the wicket-keeper standing up?
8. Are you satisfied that none of the conditions pose an actual and foreseeable risk to the safety of any player or umpire?
9. Does the other umpire (if present) agree with your answers?

If the other umpire is not a current full member of the ECB ACO then you should consult with him, but your answers to the above questions should determine the outcome.



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Whenever your answers to one or more of the questions 1 to 9 above is a NO, play must be suspended until the umpires, working with those responsible for the ground, have implemented a solution that eliminates the danger.

Things to consider and actions needed before play can start, continue or resume:

Consult - Before play commences umpires should, if available, seek the view of people who know the ground and its facilities (covers etc) to agree with their colleague how GWL issues will be handled and ensure that both captains are informed.

Observe the movement and actions of the players prior to commencing and during play to help decide/affirm your answers.

Record at the time of all inspections, conversations, agreed actions, any delays/suspensions of play.

Retain these records and **Record** them on any official report on the match submit.

Listen to what others are saying, consider it and reach your own independent conclusions.

Ensure - play never starts or resumes without the umpires carrying out an inspection of the whole ground to confirm the answer to the above questions are all Yes.

Delay - do not wait until the end of the over - if an answer is NO suspend play immediately.

Other points to note

1. Once play has commenced it is not necessary for it to rain etc again - if any of the answers become a NO, then play should be suspended immediately.
2. If players wish to continue, in spite of the umpires concluding it is dangerous, umpires should tell them they will not umpire the match under the prevailing conditions.
3. If players refuse to play, point out the decision is yours, remind them of Law 21.3, give them a chance to change their mind and if not invoke Law 21.3.

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