

ENGLAND AND WALES CRICKET BOARD

JUNIOR CRICKETERS PLAYING IN ADULT MATCHES

Introduction

The ECB has issued the following guidance covering the participation of young cricketers in adult matches. This guidance applies to boys and girls and any reference to he/his should be interpreted to include she/her. Age groups are based on the age of the player at midnight on 31st August in the year preceding the current season.

Guidance for Clubs and Leagues

All clubs must recognise that they have a duty of care towards all young players who are representing the club. This duty of care also extends to Leagues that allow the participation of young players in adult teams in their League. The duty of care should be interpreted in two ways:

(a) Not to place a young player in a position that involves an unreasonable risk to that young player, taking account of the circumstances of the match and the relative skills of the player.

(b) Not to create a situation that places members of the opposing side in a position whereby they cannot play cricket as they would normally do against adult players. In addition the following specific requirements apply to young players in adult matches:

(c) All young players who have not reached their 18th birthday must wear a helmet with a faceguard when batting and when standing up to the stumps when keeping wicket. Parental consent not to wear a helmet should not be accepted in adult matches. A young player acting as a runner must also wear a helmet even if the player he is running for is not doing so.

(d) The current ECB fielding regulations must be adhered to and enforced by the umpires and captain. The umpires are empowered by these fielding regulations to stop the game immediately if a young player comes within the restricted distance.

(e) The umpires and the opposing captain must be notified of the age group of all players participating in an adult match who are in the Under 19 age group or younger even if the player is not a fast bowler. This requirement also covers any young player taking the field as a substitute fielder. The ECB Team Sheet cards are freely available to facilitate this.

(f) Any player in the Under 13 age group and younger must have explicit written consent from a parent or guardian before participating in adult matches. Clubs must ensure that their player registration procedures ensure that consent is obtained. The guidance related to changing and showering (see 'Safe Hands' - Cricket's Policy for Safeguarding Children) must be adhered to.

(g) Any club wishing to play a player in the Under 11 age group in an adult League or Cup match must obtain the explicit prior approval of the League or Cup management before the player can play. Approval should only be given to exceptionally talented players. It is recommended that advice is sought from the County Age Group Coach or other ECB Level 3 coach as appropriate. Clubs and Leagues can apply more strict restrictions on the participation of young players in adult matches at their discretion. It is strongly recommended that a parent, guardian or other identified responsible adult is present whenever a player in the Under 13 age group or younger plays in an adult match. This could include the captain or other identified adult player taking responsibility for the young player.

This guidance applies to all cricket in England and Wales from the beginning of the 2008 season.

Fielding Regulations

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

(a) 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 middle stump, except behind the wicket on the off side, until the batsman has played at the ball.

- (b) For players in the Under 13 age group and below the distance is 11 yards (10 metres).
- (c) These minimum distances apply even if the player is wearing a helmet.
- (d) 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.
- (e) 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 6 yards (5.5 metres) of the bat, 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.
- (f) 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.

All questions and comments on this guidance should be addressed to:

Paul Bedford, Head of Operations - Non First Class Cricket at Lord's:

paul.bedford@ecb.co.uk, 0207 4321216, fax 0207 289 5619,

or by post to:

ECB Cricket Dept, Lords Cricket Ground, London NWS 8QZ

YOUNG PLAYERS

1) ECB Safe Hands Policy (October 2003)

The Competition is firmly and enthusiastically committed to ensuring that Cricket within the Competition provides a safe, friendly and enjoyable experience for children and vulnerable adults. To this end the Competition, requires that member clubs implement fully the ECB Safe Hands Policy (October 2003) in respect of the welfare of young people in cricket. The Welfare Officer from each club shall be defined and recorded in the Competition's handbook.

2) Age Groups

Age Groups in the L&DCC are hereinafter based throughout on ages as defined by the MCC Laws of Cricket (2000 Code 2nd Edition - 2003)/ECB Fast Bowling Match Directives. In consequence age groups are based on the age of the player at midnight on 31st August in the year preceding the current season.

3) ECB Fast Bowling Match Directives

Max. Age	Overs per spell	Max. overs per day
Up to 13	5 overs per spell	10 overs per day
U14, U15	6 overs per spell	12 overs per day
U16, U17, U18, U19	7 overs per spell	18 overs per day

(a) 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.

(b) Having completed a spell the bowler cannot bowl again, from either end, until the equivalent 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.

(c) 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.

(d) (i) Once a bowler covered by these Directives has bowled in a match he cannot exceed the maximum number of overs per day for his age group even if he subsequently bowls spin.

(ii) 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.

(iii) 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.

(e) Captains, Team Managers and Umpires are asked to ensure that these directives are followed at all times.

* Any reference to he/his should be interpreted to include she/her. Additional guidance on what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances' can be obtained from the ECB Cricket Department.

ECB Guidelines for junior players in open age cricket

These guidelines cover the selection and participation of young players in open age cricket. They designed to help clubs to decide when to select young players in open age cricket and how best to help their cricketing development when they play within open age groups. They apply to boys and girls equally. Age groups are based on the age of the player at midnight on 31st August in the year preceding the current season.

Section 3 – ECB Guidelines for junior players in open age cricket – December 2009

Guidance for Clubs and Leagues

All clubs must recognise that they have a duty of care towards all young players who are representing the club. This duty of care also extends to Leagues that allow the participation of young players in open age groups in their League. The duty of care should be interpreted in two ways:

- Not to place a young player in a position that involves an unreasonable risk to that young player, taking account of the circumstances of the match and the relative skills of the player.
- Not to create a situation that places members of the opposing side in a position whereby they cannot play cricket as they would normally do against adult players. In addition the following specific requirements apply to young players in open age cricket.

1. Making the step up from junior to open age cricket is a significant event in any player's cricket experience. Ensure that the player's safety, personal development needs and overall cricket experience are considered.

2. There is no definitive age at which they should be introduced to open age cricket but determine each case on an individual basis dependent on their ability and stage of cognitive and emotional maturity to take part at this level, taking into account the requirement that no Junior Cricketers younger than the age group of under 13 can play in open age cricket.

3. ECB Fast Bowling Directives and Fielding Regulations should always be adhered to for junior players in open age cricket. All young players who have not reached their 18th birthday must wear a helmet with a faceguard when batting and either a helmet or faceguard when standing up to the stumps when keeping wicket. A young player acting as a runner must also wear a helmet even if the player they are running for is not doing so.

4. ECB Guidance on the safe use of helmets is included in this Handbook on page 77 and must be adhered to.

5. Any player in the Under 13 age group must have explicit written consent from a parent or guardian before participating in open age cricket. Clubs must ensure that their player registration procedures ensure that consent is obtained.

6. Clubs should:

- 6.1 provide an opportunity for players to show their talents in an appropriate way; children who are just used as fielders will not fully experience the game;
- 6.2 Be supportive at all times for all forms of effort even when children are not successful. Try and put them in situations where they will experience some success (however small) and ensure plenty of praise and encouragement; and
- 6.3 Try and involve them in all aspects of the game wherever possible i.e. socializing, team talks, practice, decision making etc. so that they feel part of the team.

7. Children will often feel more comfortable and able to perform if they have a family member or friend also playing in the side.

8. Remember, children's early experiences will remain with them always and will often determine whether they want to remain playing the game or give up and do something else!

9. Clubs and Leagues can apply more strict restrictions on the participation of young players in open age cricket at their discretion. It is strongly recommended that a parent, guardian or other identified responsible adult is present whenever a player in the Under 13 age group plays open age cricket. This could include the captain or other identified adult player taking responsibility for the young player.

Minimum age

Players who are selected in a County U12 squad in spring for a summer squad or in another squad deemed by ECB Performance Managers to be of a standard above 'district level' for that season are eligible to play Open age cricket. This is providing they are at least 11 years old, are in School Year 7 on 1st September in the year preceding the season, and have written parental consent to play. In allowing these players to play in open age cricket it is essential clubs and coaches recognise the 'duty of care' obligations they have towards these young players