



SACA

School Cricket



North East Region – Cricket 101

Cricket is a complex and at times difficult game to coach and umpire. It also is one of the most rewarding sports, seeing players develop, friendships made, runs scored and wickets taken. As a coach or umpire we all have responsibilities, what we sometimes get confused with is where these responsibilities lie.

A coach and umpire often consider themselves a part of a team, which they certainly are. Ultimately though coaches and umpires are responsible for every person that crosses their path, this includes opposition players, coaches, umpires and supporters.

Now might be a good time to clarify some of the rules that create debate and also to emphasise the important role the coach and umpire plays on a Saturday morning or Friday evening.

99% of the matches go ahead without any problems due to the great work of volunteer coaches and umpires, who work together to provide a positive experience for the players. However, as earlier stated, cricket can be a complicated game. Often the rules aren't 100% clear or differ from competition to competition. Sometimes disagreements about rules can lead to friction between coaches.

Cooperation between coaches

Coaches are encouraged to discuss the rules and time constraints with their opponents before each match. The primary school cricket rules are intended as a guide and coaches and managers are reminded to use their common sense and reach a mutual agreement with the opposition on any minor alterations to these guidelines. The aim is to provide all players with an enjoyable game of cricket and the rules are in place to facilitate this.

There are too many variables on a Saturday morning for the rules to adequately cover every single situation that might occur:-

- Handling a novice player who bowls with a suspect action
- Handling a player that will leave early / arrive late due to other commitments
- How the batting order will be organised when competing teams have uneven numbers
- Whether sub-fielders will be provided if one team is short of players
- How the bowling limits are adjusted when a team uses more than one wicket keeper etc.

If coaches can work together and agree beforehand on how they are going to deal with these types of situations, then there is less chance that they will become an issue when the game is on the line.

The letter of the law may not be adequate. Most times achieving the right outcome depends on the coaches' cooperation, common sense and sense of fair play.

Umpiring errors

Learning to accept the umpire's decision (right or wrong) is an important, character-building part of the game that children must learn to understand. If an umpire makes a mistake during a game then that decision must be accepted and respected by players, coaches and parents.

If a coach or parent questions an umpire or argues with their decision, then this shows a lack of respect and will be picked up upon by the players.

If you disagree with a decision then speak to the umpire during a break or at the end of the game. They are not to be queried or have anyone attempt to over-rule them in front of the players.

Umpires are able to seek advice or clarification on the rules at any stage. However, whether they seek this advice is up to them. Other coaches or parents are not to force their opinion on them or to challenge their decisions.

Competition in junior sports

For many of the young cricketers playing in these matches, this is the first time they have been involved in a genuinely competitive situation on the sporting field. The children are learning how to cope and how to behave in these situations and will learn from the adults around them. The adults are their role models and the children will copy the behaviour they observe.

Even in the heat of a contest, coaches are required to:-

- Avoid the temptation to over-play the most talented players
- Respect umpires' decisions and teach your players to do likewise
- Focus on your team's efforts and performance rather than on whether they win or lose
- Appreciate good performance and skilful plays by all participants

No balls and wides

It seems as though every competition in the world runs to a different set of rules in regards to wides and no balls. Below is a more thorough explanation.

On a matting or concrete pitch;

- The bowler's end umpire calls a ball wide if it lands on the pitch but the batsman did not have a reasonable opportunity to score off the ball.

- A ball that lands off the pitch is a no ball and is called by the bowler's end umpire. The batter is free to hit the ball and score as many runs as they can, plus the team gets one run for the no ball. The batter cannot be dismissed bowled or caught because it is a no ball, however, they can be run out.

- If the batter makes contact with a ball that lands on the pitch but would have gone for a wide had he/she left or missed it, then it is not called a wide.

On a turf pitch;

- The bowler's end umpire calls a ball wide if the batsman did not have a reasonable opportunity to score off the ball.

- If the batter makes contact with a ball that lands off the pitch then it is not called a wide or no ball.

- If the batter makes contact with a ball that lands on the pitch but would have gone for a wide had he/she left or missed it, then it is not called a wide.

Full tosses;

- A no ball for a full toss above waist height is called by the umpire at the bowler's end. This umpire may ask the square leg umpire for guidance should they require it, but the decision rests with the umpire at the bowler's end.

Penalty runs for wides and no balls;

- The batting team receives one bonus run for any wide or no ball bowled plus any other runs that are scored off that delivery.

- Example 1: If the wicket keeper misses a wide and the batters run a single, then two wides are scored by the batting team.

- Example 2: If the batter hits a no ball and the batters run a single, then two runs are scored by the batting team (one no ball and one to the batter).

- Example 3: If the wicket keeper misses a wide and one of the batters is run out (therefore losing their wicket) while attempting a single, then the batting team still receives one run for the wide.