
Law 24

24-A Delivery rolling into outfield

What happens if the ball finishes up rolling towards the fielder at extra cover? Can the striker go after the ball and try to play it?

If the ball behaves so abnormally, the first consideration for the umpire is whether it has been 'delivered' or not. He would be justified in considering the ball not delivered if, for example, it travelled backwards out of the bowler's hand or stuck in the bowler's hand so that it hit the ground a yard in front of his feet. These two situations are merely examples to illustrate the principle. The umpire must judge. If he considers that the ball has not been 'delivered', in this sense, he shall call Dead ball.

If, however, he is satisfied that it has been delivered, the fact that the ball is rolling along the ground means that No ball is to be called in any case under Law 24.6. Beyond this, there are two issues.

Although, as enshrined in Law 40.5 (Restriction on action by the wicket-keeper), the striker has an absolute right to try to play the ball, without interference from the fielding side, this right should not be regarded as extending to any area of the field of play. The game will be brought into disrepute if strikers are allowed to run out to e.g. mid-wicket to hit the ball. It will be for **the umpire on the day to decide** what is acceptable in this situation.

Moreover, when the ball is near a fielder, as implied in this question, an attempt by the striker to hit the ball means risk of injury to the fielder. For both these reasons, the call of No ball should be followed by a call of Dead ball.

Either of the principles set out above could apply separately in appropriate circumstances.
[Law reference: 24.6, 40.5]

24-B Ball caught or deflected by fielder before delivery reaches wicket

The bowler delivers the ball fairly but wide of the wicket. What is the situation if, before reaching the line of the striker's wicket, the ball is

- (a) caught by a fielder, who then throws the ball to put down either wicket, with the batsman out of his ground. Is the batsman run out?
- (b) deflected by a fielder on to either wicket with the batsman out of his ground. Is the batsman out?
- (c) deflected by a fielder but not on to a wicket? Could the batsmen run?

In each case, the answer is No. The fielder catching the ball before it reaches the striker is to be considered as a case of the ball coming to rest before reaching the line of the striker's wicket. The umpire should call No ball and then immediately call Dead ball under Law 24.7. The logic behind Law 24.7 is that, on the one hand, while provision in Law must be made for such abnormal deliveries they must be kept firmly in the category of mishaps and not allowed to become a ploy by the bowler. The calling of No ball clearly labels the deliveries unfair and penalises the fielding side for them. On the other hand obviously it is unreasonable to consider that the striker has received a delivery and had the opportunity to play it. Hence the call of Dead ball. Although in cases (b) and (c) the ball has not actually 'come to rest', even in the sense used in (a), the same logic applies and the same action of calling No ball and then immediately calling Dead ball, should apply.

[Law reference: 38.1(a)(ii), 24.7]
