
Law 40

40-A Playing without a wicket-keeper

Can a team play without a wicket-keeper?

The umpires are to recognise a player as a wicket-keeper by his actions and positioning. Therefore playing without a wicket-keeper implies that a side would have no one to gather deliveries missed by the striker and could have no one behind the stumps for catches coming off the bat but only slightly deflected. Any player in such a position as the ball was being delivered and received would be recognised as a wicket-keeper and subject to the restrictions placed on wicket-keepers. Moreover, with no player in a position to be recognised as a wicket-keeper, the side could not effect a stumping, would be strictly confined to having only two players behind the popping crease on the leg side at the instant of delivery and could have no player wearing gloves or external leg guards. There would also be no defined position where a fielder could place a helmet he did not wish to wear. Nevertheless, there is nothing in Law which requires a side to have a wicket-keeper, if a captain so chooses. The umpires would have to be vigilant, however, to ensure that the fielding side did not try to have the advantages of having a wicket-keeper as well as the advantages of having an 11th 'normal' fielder.

[Law reference: 40.1, 40.3, 39.1, 41.5]
