
Law 41

41-A The difference between a fielder's helmet and a fielder's cap.

Please explain the difference between a helmet and a cap in the various situations that can arise if the fielder is not wearing these items.

There is no breach of Law if a ball in play strikes a cap or a helmet worn on a fielder's head. Either is a legitimate part of his person. There are, however, certain ways in which the striker cannot be out if the ball rebounds from a helmet worn by a fielder. This applies only to a helmet and not to a cap or anything else he is wearing. If the ball in play hits a cap or helmet **not** being worn, the umpire has to decide whether the ball has 'wilfully been fielded other than with his person'.

'wilfully' is a key word in Law 41.2. Unfortunately it does not have a single simple interpretation. The umpire has to recognise different degrees of wilfulness, according to the situation. If a fielder's cap *falls* off and the ball touches it, the Law has not been broken and the ball remains in play. The same would be true of a pair of spectacles or any other item (difficult to imagine) capable of *falling* off, **except the fielder's helmet**. If, however, he had *pushed* his cap off, or had *taken* off a sweater, even though he may not deliberately manoeuvre the object to intercept the ball, because he had removed it deliberately he is to be considered as wilfully fielding the ball otherwise than with his person.

A helmet is to be considered differently. If the ball hits a helmet not being worn, whether it has fallen off or been taken off, it is to be considered that the ball has been fielded unfairly.

In applying penalties for the unfair fielding, items of 'clothing' are to be regarded as carrying a slightly lower degree of wilfulness than helmets.

If the ball *accidentally* touches
an item of clothing (not a helmet) which has *fallen* off
there has been no breach of Law. The ball remains in play.

If the ball *accidentally* touches
an item of clothing which has been *consciously* taken off
or a helmet, irrespective of how it has been removed
the ball has been unfairly fielded within the terms of Law 41.3. The ball becomes dead, a 5-run penalty is awarded but **no** report is to be made.

If the fielder *deliberately* tries to field the ball by manoeuvring
an item of clothing or a helmet, irrespective of how either has been removed
again the ball has been wilfully fielded unfairly. In this case, however, the actual *attempt to field* was wilful, and therefore it is to be considered within the terms of Law 41.2. The ball becomes dead, a 5-run penalty is awarded **and** a report is to be made.

[Law reference: 41.2, 41.3]
