
Law 42

42-A The bowling of high full pitched balls

How does an umpire decide whether a delivery is 'a slow delivery' if a slow bowler bowls a faster ball, or conversely, a fast bowler bowls a slower ball?

The pace of any delivery is to be judged against what is to be considered 'fast' or 'slow' within the context of the particular match. How it compares with other deliveries by that bowler is irrelevant.

[Law reference: 42.6(b)]

42-B Dangerous and unfair bowling

In the new 2003 version of Law 42.7(b) should the words 'at the same batsman' be inserted before 'by the same bowler in the same innings', or is it intended that a second warning is to be issued if a previously warned bowler delivers, for example, a fast short pitched ball over head height at any batsman?

No - to both questions. The wording is as intended and should not be changed. Neither, however, is the wording to be interpreted as suggested in the question.

Fast high full pitches are straightforward. Law 42.6(b)(i) states categorically that any such ball is to be deemed dangerous and unfair. Consequently, under Law 42.6(b)(ii), on any and every occasion when a bowler delivers a high full pitch, action is to be taken against him, irrespective of who the striker is. Unless the umpire considers it was delivered deliberately, (taken care of by Law 42.8), this action will be a first warning, a final warning or suspension, depending on whether there have been previous warnings. *It is quite irrelevant which particular form of dangerous and unfair bowling has caused any previous warning to be issued or which batsman was involved.*

For **fast short pitched bowling**, there are a number of considerations. It does not become dangerous and unfair until the umpire so decides, according to both sections of 42.6(a). That decision will be based on the ability of a particular batsman to handle such bowling, remembering that this ability will be eroded by repetition. This decision cannot apply to other batsmen. Once it is made, however, not only will a warning be issued, but any single repetition of the same type of bowling *to that batsman* will require further warning. On the other hand, for a different batsman warning will not be triggered until the umpire decides that such bowling has become dangerous and unfair for *that* batsman. If, however, the bowler concerned has already been warned, the warning now to be issued will be the second and final one, even though the previous warning related to a different batsman. Similarly, after two previous warnings, a new decision about a batsman will mean suspension for the bowler.

It should be clear in 42.7(a) that a first warning will result from either the umpire coming to such a decision, or the bowling of a single dangerous and unfair high full pitch. Once this first warning has been issued, further instance, or further repetition of dangerous and unfair bowling is therefore

- either the delivery of a dangerous and unfair high full pitch to *any* batsman
- or just one single delivery of the type that the umpire has *already* decided is dangerous and unfair for the batsman facing it
- or the umpire reaching *for the first time* a decision that the bowling of fast short pitched balls is dangerous and unfair for the batsman now facing.

[Law reference: 42.6, 42.7]

42-C Fast short-pitched balls bouncing over head height.

There seems to be a contradiction in Law 42.6. The first paragraph explains that the umpire must consider whether fast short pitched balls are likely to cause injury. He is not to take action until he decides that there has been too much repetition of such balls. The second paragraph, however, says he is to take action at once for any ball which bounces over head height, so obviously can't cause injury. Can you please explain?

It should first be noted that although the heading of Law 42.6 is 'Bowling of fast short pitched balls', section (a)(ii) begins with the words (without the emboldening) **Any** delivery which after pitching. . . . There is no reference to the pace of the ball, nor to its being short pitched. This section therefore applies to **all** deliveries which pitch and then bounce over head height of the striker standing upright at the crease, whether fast or not.

The calling (and signalling) of No ball for deliveries bouncing over head height is entirely separate from considering them as contributing to the sequence leading to a decision that the bowling has become dangerous and unfair. Under Law 25.1(b) there is a case for considering these deliveries to be Wides. Wielding the bat above the head, almost as though it were a tennis racquet, is certainly not a 'normal cricket stroke'. Law 42.6(a)(ii) instructs that they shall instead be No balls for two reasons. On the one hand No balls give the striker more protection from dismissal; on the other hand, if the striker does hit a No ball, it is still a No ball and the 1 run penalty is still awarded. This is not true of Wides.

The umpire will be monitoring the bowling of all fast short pitched balls. A batsman needs to have very quick reactions and be very alert in order to deal successfully with them. Although a competent batsman might achieve this at first, his alertness and speed of reaction will wane with frustration and tiredness. Both of these aspects apply to a 'fast short pitched ball bouncing over head height'. In addition, the continual awareness that he is in danger if he gets it wrong, perhaps stimulating at first, will also take its toll. Since he very possibly may not know when the ball pitches that it will rise so high as to be harmless, this applies to the 'harmless bouncer' too. This is why the umpire is instructed to include **all** deliveries bouncing over head height as part of the repetition. It should be noted, however, that when the umpire calls No ball for such a delivery, it is a **stand alone penalty**. It is **not the start** of the action of warning, final warning and suspension. That process is triggered **only** by the umpire's decision that the bowling has *become* dangerous and unfair for a particular batsman.

[Law reference: 42.6, 25]

42-D The relative skill of a batsman (1)

The Law instructs that in judging dangerous and unfair bowling, the relative skill of the batsman should be taken into consideration. Should special consideration be given to a 'night-watchman', coming in when a wicket falls close to the end of a day's play?

The description 'night-watchman' is not used in the Laws. It is used informally of a batsman who comes in when a wicket falls near the end of a day's play, with the specific intention that, although he is not likely to score many runs, he can play the bowling safely, so that a more skilful batsman, who could be expected to score more freely the following day, is not exposed to the risk of losing his wicket before the close of play. The description, therefore, cannot apply except in games of more than one day's duration. Moreover, it can apply only to a player considered by his captain to be capable of facing the bowling.

When a new batsman comes in, at any stage in an innings, he is just that - a new batsman. The umpire is not expected to be clairvoyant nor should he presume anything from the batsman's position in the batting order. The umpire must assume initially that any new batsman is capable of dealing with the bowling. Whether or not there is anything to indicate to the umpire that he is a traditional 'night watchman' is irrelevant, especially remembering that the possibility of a night watchman can arise only in matches of more than one day's

duration. Such games are not played in lower levels of cricket. A more exact assessment of each batsman's level of skill must be made from seeing him in action, that is by seeing how well he deals with the deliveries he receives.

[Law reference: 42.6]

42-E The relative skill of a batsman (2)

The answer given to an earlier question on dangerous and unfair bowling instructed that the umpire must judge the skill of a batsman by seeing him in action. Might this not mean that an inexperienced batsman could be in danger?

It has to be remembered that the Law uses the term 'relative skill'. A beginner is not in particular danger when all the other players are also beginners. It would scarcely be appropriate to rely on each captain's judgment to draw up some list of 'ratings' before the start of play. Even if it were, it would not deal with the description 'relative', since he would know only his own players. It is therefore impossible for the umpire to have foreknowledge of each batsman's skill in relation to the bowling he might have to face. It has to be assumed that the players are in general capable of taking part adequately in the match. Skills may vary, however, and the umpire has to assess each batsman's level of skill (in the context of the game) by seeing how well he deals with the deliveries he receives.

On the other hand both the umpires and the captains have a duty of care to the players. At some levels of cricket there might be good reason to consider a particular batsman specially vulnerable. When such a batsman comes to the wicket, the umpire should be satisfied that the bowler has been made aware of the situation through his captain. Such special cases should be picked up when the lists of players are given to one of the umpires before the toss.

[Law reference: 42.6]

42-F Bowler runs on the protected area in follow-through, not having released the ball

A bowler fails to release the ball in his delivery stride. The umpire calls Dead ball. The bowler continues running, however, and runs on to the protected area. Has he breached Law 42.12?

Yes, he has. Even though he has not released the ball, the continuation of his run is to be considered as part of the bowler's bowling action. If, during it, the bowler runs on the protected area the umpire will take appropriate action. The fact that Dead ball has been called does not affect this.

[Law reference: 42.12]

42-G Damage to pitch not restricted to the protected area

In talking of damage caused by fielders or batsmen, why is the word 'pitch' used, rather than 'protected area'?

Before the 2000 Code, the Law put the onus on the umpires to intervene and prevent players from causing damage to any part of the pitch which might have assisted the bowlers of either side. One of several difficulties with this was that umpires could not have foreknowledge of what would help bowlers they had not yet seen. Another difficulty was intervening to prevent action which had not yet happened! In the 2000 Code this has been simplified. It does not require preventative action by the umpires. They now have to award punishment for contravention. Contravention, however, is differently defined. It is causing avoidable damage to the pitch.

The description 'avoidable damage' was introduced in the 2000 Code. It takes account of two facts.

One is that **any** movement on the surface will wear away that surface to a greater or lesser extent. Even a mouse running up and down on more or less the same path will in time wear

that path bare. It would take a very long time for the damage to become visible, but the wear will have started long before it did so. It is the same for players, except that the build up of wear would reach the stage when it became visible very much more quickly.

The other is that the normal conduct of the game will require players to be on the pitch, even on the protected area, at times. The striker taking guard and playing the ball will do so on the pitch. A fielder may have to go on to the pitch to field the ball. The bowler cannot help but have the first part of his follow through on the pitch. All such legitimate activities will cause wear, but this will be unavoidable. Avoidable damage is obviously caused by a player who leaves marks by digging his feet in unnecessarily hard, turning unnecessarily sharply and so on. It is also caused **whenever** a player moves about on the pitch when he has no need to be there.

Specifically in Law, the protected area relates to the bowler in the same way as under the 1980 Code. He has to move off the protected area within a specified distance, now 5 feet, in his follow through. A bowler is a fielder, however and in common with all fielders he too has a responsibility to avoid unnecessary damage to **any** part of the pitch. A batsman has the same responsibility and the striker is to run off the pitch as soon as possible after he has exercised his right either to play the ball or not.

[Law reference: 42.14, 42.15]

42-H Damage to pitch when bowler runs on the protected area

If the bowler runs on the protected area in his follow through he is subject to the penalties set out in Law 42.12. Does this mean that if he causes damage which the umpire considers was wilful, then he is not liable to the 5-run penalty, prescribed in 42.13?

The bowler is a fielder, albeit a specialised one. The definition of a fielder in Appendix D confirms this. Laws which apply to fielders apply to him. It is recognised that he will have to run on some part of the pitch in his follow through and therefore the wear and tear on that part of the pitch is not *avoidable* damage. If he runs on the protected area, he has breached the Law merely by doing so. Any damage that may result from the mere act of running on in his follow through is covered by the penalty of warnings and ultimate suspension for that offence. He is not to be *separately* penalised for that damage. This provision applies to his status as a bowler. If however, he goes beyond this and *deliberately* causes damage to any part of the pitch, whether in his follow through or later, then his being a bowler is irrelevant. As a fielder he will incur the penalty set out in Law 42.13. If the wilful damage is done when he is running on the protected area in his follow through, he will incur both penalties.

[Law reference: 42.12, 42.13]

42-J What constitutes a run in progress?

If a fielder wilfully obstructs a batsman in running, among other things the run in progress is to count whether the batsmen had crossed or not. What constitutes a run in progress?

The situation of the non-striker is that at any time when he is out of his ground while the ball is in play he is deemed to be running. If, after the striker has received the ball, either batsman is the subject of an attempted distraction or obstruction, and the non-striker is out of his ground at the instant of the call of Dead ball, then a run is in progress.

The position of the striker is different. He can be out of his ground and still not be classed as running. The striker's movement may only be part of his playing at the ball, or it may be an attempt to run. Only the umpire(s) seeing the action can decide. The same decision has to be made in the case of a stumping.

It takes both batsmen to complete a run, but it needs the action of only one of them to constitute a run being in progress.

Once, however, a run has been completed, the roles of 'striker' and 'non-striker' no longer apply. The umpire will have to judge whether either or both of the batsmen is attempting a run. Again, it needs only one batsman to be considered to be attempting a run for a run to be in progress.

[Law reference: 42.5]

42-K Attempting a dismissal when batsmen try to steal a run before delivery

In Law 42.16, if the bowler takes no action the umpire is to call Dead ball, award 5 penalty runs (to the fielding side) and report the offence. However, this is only if the bowler does not attempt to run out either batsman. If he attempts to run out the non-striker and fails, under Law 42.15 Dead ball is to be called. The fielding side get no penalty runs, but at least have had the opportunity to take the non-striker's wicket. If he attempts to run out the striker and fails, not only is no penalty awarded but under Law 24.4 No ball is to be called. The fielding side have been penalised but it is the batting side who are trying to cheat. This seems completely unfair.

It should be noted that this provision of Law has scarcely changed in the 2000 Code from what it was in the 1980 Code. In fact the fielding side has marginally less disadvantage now, in that at least the striker can be run out in spite of the throw being a No ball, whether he is attempting a run or not.

One consideration is that the umpire is not now expected to read the bowler's mind. It used to say 'throws the ball **at the striker's wicket, in an attempt to run him out**'. Now it merely says 'towards the striker's end'.

The bowler has a range of options - and they are the same as those he had before.

He can try to get the striker out in a variety of normal ways.

He can also try throwing the ball towards the striker's end (before entering his delivery stride). Here, if he fails he has not only given away a No ball penalty and another delivery in the over, which would happen in either case, he has given the batsmen a chance to score. If he succeeds, he has secured a dismissal.

He can attempt to run out the non-striker - less risk here. If he fails, Dead ball is called and so there is another delivery in the over.

He can stop and not deliver the ball - no risk at all here. The umpire will stop proceedings in any case and if he considers that the batsmen were trying to steal a run he will impose penalties on the batting side - but the bowler loses the possibility of a dismissal on that delivery.

If he chooses a high risk option (for whatever reason) then he has to accept that risk. It is not to be considered unfair that the Law offers him the choice.

[Law reference: 42.16, 24.4, 42.15]

42-L Striker 'padding ball away' drops bat

A delivery is not a No ball. The striker makes no attempt to play it with his bat, but pushes it away with his pad. In doing so he drops his bat. Could he be out Caught if the ball touches the bat? What would be the situation if the action of dropping his bat was deliberate?

The answer to the first question is No. Law 6.3(a) stipulates that reference to the bat is to imply that the bat is held by the batsman. Therefore the requirement for a catch, that the ball be touched by the striker's bat, will not be satisfied unless the striker's hand is in contact with the bat.

If the umpire judged that the manner in which the bat was dropped meant that the action

was deliberate, he would be justified in considering it an attempt to avoid being caught and consequently unfair and against the Spirit of the Game. He would therefore have to warn the player's captain and report both the captain and player accordingly under Law 42.18.

Moreover, it could very well be that the action would hinder the fielders in moving to field the ball, and if there was an appeal, the umpire would have to consider seriously giving the striker out under Law 37 (Obstructing the field). If the ball hit the striker's glove the striker could not be out Caught but, since he had deliberately discarded his bat the contact could be considered as wilfully handling the ball, on exactly the same basis as the ball hitting a deliberately discarded helmet or piece of clothing is considered to be wilfully fielding the ball illegally. Then, on appeal, there would be justification for dismissing the striker, Handled the ball (Law 33)

[Law reference: 42.18, 33, 37]
