

LAW 6: THE BAT

Analysis points

- a Specifications of bat
- b Material allowed for covering the blade
- c The bat
 - held by batsman
 - hand or glove to count as part of bat

Commentary

The current Law, introduced in 2008, lays down very detailed specifications for the bat. The manufacturers have the principal responsibility for seeing that bats comply with these. The umpires can be expected to check no more than the visible features of a bat.

- a Grading

The grade of a bat indicates features which are or are not permitted, **not the quality of the bat**. All bats will be marked with a grade in due course but many players will still have bats showing no grade. However, in the absence of any Competition Rules banning Grade C – bats with complete cloth covering – all three grades can be accepted in recreational cricket. Bats which do not qualify for any of the three categories may not be used except by special regulation or in forms of cricket not within the Laws.
- b Specifications of bat

An inspection of each bat that is brought to the wicket is not appropriate. Umpires should, however, be visually alert to see that:

 - the length is not more than 38 inches. Length varies with the stature of the batsman. The maximum of 38 inches is rarely reached in practice.
 - the width is not more than 4¼ inches. Umpires should check any bat that appears to be too wide. Bat gauges are available for this purpose.
 - there is nothing to indicate material other than wood in the blade.
 - the surface of anti-scuff material or any binding on the blade is not likely to damage the ball beyond normal wear and tear. Brittle plastic which can crack and develop sharp edges, a hard grained surface which could be abrasive are two examples of unacceptable materials.
- c Law 6.8 is extremely important. It has a direct bearing on many situations within the game. It applies in any Law where the bat is mentioned, except as set out in the paragraph below.

There are only two Laws (28 and 35), both relating to the putting down of the wicket, in which a bat not being held by a batsman has any relevance. This is spelt out clearly in the wording of those two Laws. Elsewhere, where there is no such specific wording, ‘the bat’ must always be taken as ‘the bat held by the batsman’. The bat will be ‘held’ if the glove *worn* on a hand (or the bare hand) is in contact with the bat. Contact between the bat and a glove *not* being worn has no significance.

It should be appreciated that for a batsman anything attached to him which is not his bat is his person (and *vice versa*). The definitions in Appendix D give further guidance on what items make up his person.

	bare hand	glove worn on hand	glove attached* to batsman, not being worn
holding bat	bat	bat	N/A
not holding bat	person	person	person

* Attached – carried in a hand, tucked into a waistband etc. Any item, including a glove, which is completely separate from the batsman has no significance with regard to his person, except as stated in Laws 28 and 35.

Part (b) of Law 6.8 sets out clearly when the ball can be regarded as having made contact with the bat. This is vital information for the umpire in several situations.