Summary of changes to the Laws of Cricket 2017 Code

April 2017

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THE HOME OF CRICKET

Introduction

A new Code of the Laws of Cricket has been drafted and approved by the M.C.C. Committee. The Code, to be titled *Laws of Cricket 2017 Code* will come into force on 1st October 2017. The last time that a new Code of Laws was written was in 2000. With the way the game has evolved since then, there have been 6 Editions of that Code, with changes made in 2003, 2008, 2010, 2013 and 2015. It was felt that the time was right for a new Code of Laws, providing a chance to review all the Laws, to make some significant alterations and to tidy up many of the piecemeal changes made since 2000.

The guiding objectives behind all the changes have been:

- to make the Laws work in a way that makes sense to players, umpires and spectators;
- to make the Laws as easy as possible to understand and interpret for new umpires, particularly those for whom English is not their first language;
- to minimise the likelihood of types of misconduct that have been causing players, and particularly umpires, to leave the game;
- to make the Laws as inclusive as possible to all who might play, umpire or watch cricket.

The redrafting process has taken nearly three years and has been driven by M.C.C.'s Laws sub-committee, comprising the following people:

Russell Cake (Chairman)
former First Class and league cricketer.

Stan Bennett*
Recreational player then umpire; umpire educator and assessor; former Chairman of ACU&S Technical Committee.

Deborah Burns*
Umpire; ECB ACO Tutor; former County Education Officer and member of ECBACO Level 2 Taskforce

Alan Fordham*
ECB Head of Cricket Operations (First Class), responsible for writing ECB's playing regulations; former Northamptonshire cricketer.

Chinmay Gupte
former First Class and league cricketer.

John Jameson*
former England and Warwickshire cricketer; former First Class umpire; umpire educator.

Chris Kelly
ECB Umpires' Manager; former First Class umpire; former ICC Umpires' & Referees' Manager; recreational cricketer.

Paddy O'Hara
former league cricketer and International umpire in Ireland; former ACU&S tutor; umpire assessor and mentor in Northern Ireland ACU&S; former ICC Europe assessor.

John Stephenson*
M.C.C. Assistant Secretary (Cricket); former England, Essex and Hampshire cricketer.

Fraser Stewart*
M.C.C.'s Laws Manager; former Minor Counties & league cricketer.

Simon Taufel
former ICC Elite Panel Umpire; former ICC Umpire Performance and Training Manager; Cricket Australia's Match Referee & Umpire Selection Manager.

Mark Williams*
M.C.C.'s Laws Advisor; former Minor Counties cricketer; County 2nd XI umpire; ECB ACO Tutor.

**denotes membership of the Laws Drafting Group*

All 42 Laws have been scrutinized. The following processes have been carried out:

- A global consultation with National Governing Bodies & umpires' associations on areas of the Laws that they felt required changes. Many of these recommendations have been included in the new Code of Laws.
- Close collaboration with the ECB Association of Cricket Officials throughout the process for advice and feedback.
- Trials of a player behaviour system used in 3 Premier Leagues and in MCC Universities Cricket in 2016, as well as monitoring similar systems used in various leagues around the world.
- Collaboration with ECB on player behaviour in recreational and junior cricket.
- Scrutiny throughout the whole process by the Laws sub-committee and the Cricket Committee.
- Approval and guidance on major changes has been sought at ICC Cricket committee.
- The M.C.C. World Cricket committee was kept fully informed throughout the process and has given its support to the outcomes.
- M.C.C.'s Laws sub-committee has overseen the entire re-drafting process.
- Approval was given by M.C.C.'s Cricket committee and the M.C.C. Committee in March 2017.

Summary of the key changes

There are still 42 Laws, although two previous Laws have been deleted, with two additions. The significant changes are:

- The new Code of Laws is written in language applying to all persons, regardless of gender. The new Code includes an increased use of generic nouns like 'fielder' and 'bowler' and uses 'he/she' when required, together with a broadened disclaimer covering all genders. The term 'batsman' remains, however.
- The Handled the ball Law has been deleted, with its contents merged into Obstructing the field, reducing the list of dismissals from ten to nine. This will have no effect on *whether* a batsman is dismissed; rather, it is just the method of dismissal that might be changed.
- The Lost ball Law has been deleted and is now covered under Dead ball.
- The old Law 2 has been divided into two separate Laws, relating to the batsmen (Law 25) and the fielders (Law 24). These Laws have changed the concept of Penalty time, which starts to accrue immediately when a player leaves the field and which will also now affect when the player may bat.
- Law 5 (The Bat) places limits on the thickness of the edges and the overall depth of the bat. The maximum dimensions will be 108mm in width (unchanged), 67mm in depth with 40mm edges.
- Law 8.4 has been changed, to help prevent injuries, to allow specially designed mechanisms which tether the bails to the stumps, thereby restricting the distance that they can fly off the stumps but without limiting their ability to be dislodged.
- Law 24 (Fielders' absence; substitutes) now allows a substitute to keep wicket, with the consent of the umpires.
- Law 30 (Batsman out of his/her ground) has been amended to give protection to a running or diving batsman whose bat bounces up after having been grounded beyond the popping crease.
- Law 41.8 now covers the bowling of deliberate front foot No balls, which will result in the bowler being suspended from bowling.
- Law 41.15 now prevents the batsman from taking stance in a position where he/she will inevitably encroach on the protected area.
- Law 41.16 has changed so that the non-striker risks being Run out if he/she leaves his/her ground before the bowler would normally be expected to release the ball.
- Law 42 (Player Conduct) is a new Law which gives an in-match consequence for poor on-field behaviour including, for the most serious offences, temporary or permanent removal from the field of play.

The re-ordering of the Laws

The Laws have been re-ordered into a more logical sequence, so some of the Laws have a new number. Furthermore, the formatting of the numbering of the sub-sections has changed, so that, for example, Law 38.2(a)(i) would now be referred to as Law 38.2.1.1. The chart overleaf shows the new numbers for each Law.

Previous Laws

Law No	Law Name
Preamble	The Spirit of Cricket
1	The players
2	Substitutes and runners; batsman or fielder leaving the field; batsman retiring; batsman commencing innings
3	The umpires
4	The scorers
5	The ball
6	The bat
7	The pitch
8	The wickets
9	The bowling, popping and return creases
10	Preparation and maintenance of the playing area
11	Covering the pitch
12	Innings
13	The follow-on
14	Declaration and forfeiture
15	Intervals
16	Start of play; cessation of play
17	Practice on the field
18	Scoring runs
19	Boundaries
20	Lost ball
21	The result
22	The over
23	Dead ball
24	No ball
25	Wide ball
26	Bye and Leg bye
27	Appeals
28	The wicket is down
29	Batsman out of his ground
30	Bowled
31	Timed out
32	Caught
33	Handled the ball
34	Hit the ball twice
35	Hit wicket
36	Leg before wicket
37	Obstructing the field
38	Run out
39	Stumped
40	The wicket-keeper
41	The fielder
42	Fair and unfair play

Appendices

- A Law 8 (The wickets)
- B Laws 7 (The pitch) and 9 (The bowling, popping and return creases)
- C Wicket-keeping gloves
- D Definitions and explanations of words and phrases not defined in the text.
- E Law 6 (The bat)

New Law Order

Section/ Grouping	Law No	New Law name
	Preamble	The Spirit of Cricket
A. Setting up the game	1	The players
	2	The umpires
	3	The scorers
	4	The ball
	5	The bat
	6	The pitch
	7	The creases
	8	The wickets
	9	Preparation and maintenance of the playing area
	10	Covering the pitch
	11	Intervals
	12	Start of play; cessation of play
B. Innings and Result	13	Innings
	14	The follow-on
	15	Declaration and forfeiture
	16	The result
C. The Over, Scoring Runs, Dead ball and Extras	17	The over
	18	Scoring runs
	19	Boundaries
	20	Dead ball
	21	No ball
	22	Wide ball
	23	Bye and Leg bye
D. Fielders and Substitutes, Batsmen and Runners Practice on the Field Wicket Keeper	24	Fielders' absence; Substitutes
	25	Batsman's innings; Runners
	26	Practice on the field
	27	The wicket-keeper
	28	The fielder
E. Appeals and Dismissals	29	The wicket is down
	30	Batsman out of his/her ground
	31	Appeals
	32	Bowled
	33	Caught
	34	Hit the ball twice
	35	Hit wicket
	36	Leg before wicket
	37	Obstructing the field
	38	Run out
	39	Stumped
	40	Timed out
F. Unfair play	41	Unfair play
	42	Players' conduct

Appendices

- A Definitions and explanations of words and phrases not defined in the text.
- B Law 5 (The bat)
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- D Law 8 (The wickets)
- E Wicket-keeping gloves

Laws which have been removed

Previous Law 20 – Lost ball

This Law dealt with the situation when the ball is lost or irretrievable within the field of play.

It was considered that this Law is out of date and so it has been removed from the Laws. A lost ball is now extremely unlikely to happen and, when it does (down a goalpost hole for instance), it is easier to let the umpires call Dead ball when they deem a ball to be lost.

Runs scored would therefore be those runs completed plus the run in progress if the batsmen had crossed at the time when Dead ball is called. See the notes on Law 20 – Dead ball.

Previous Law 33 – Handled the ball

Since the changes made in 2013, the Handled the ball dismissal has a much more limited timeframe and it was felt sensible to combine this dismissal into Obstructing the field. Handled the ball was a special form of obstruction and it is simpler to have all types of obstruction dealt with in the same Law.

Changes to each Law in detail

The following pages explain the changes that have been made to the Laws. The actual wording of the new Laws are not provided in this document, but can be seen on the separate document entitled *Laws of Cricket 2017 Code*. All of the Laws contain some changes, even if just to account for the male / female allowance. There are also many instances where the wording has been altered, even though the outcome is the same as under the previous Code. The summaries below only concentrate on any policy changes that have been made.

Gender in the Laws

Until now, the Laws have made all references to the male gender, with a disclaimer saying that, although all such references are to men and boys, they apply equally to women and girls.

The Laws are now written in language applying to all persons, regardless of gender. Given the ever-increasing popularity of the women's game and the growth in participation amongst girls, this was seen as important and necessary step for M.C.C. to take. The new Code includes an increased use of generic nouns like 'fielder' and 'bowler' and uses 'he/she' when required. Following consultation with the Chair of the ICC's Women's Cricket Committee, Clare Connor, and several female international cricketers, it was decided that the term 'batsman' should remain. Those consulted were unanimous on this point, stating that it was a term of the game, rather than something that was gender-specific.

Measurements

Throughout the Laws, for the imperial measurements, any non-whole numbers are now shown as decimals, correct to two decimal places, rather than as fractions.

The Preamble – The Spirit of Cricket

The wording of the Preamble has been amended, principally to emphasise the positive behaviours that make cricket an exciting game that encourages leadership, friendship and teamwork. The wording is simplified and stresses the importance of the roles of coaches, teachers and parents in junior cricket. Much of the negative wording has been removed, as has reference to any behaviours already covered by the Laws.

LAW 1 – The players

The changes to Law 1 are relatively minor. There is a clarification that the match will continue for as long as possible after multiple players have been sent off under the new Law 42.

It is clarified that any person associated with the team may deputise for the captain if he or she is absent for the nomination of the players. This means that a manager, a coach or another player, for example, can provide the team sheet to the umpires before the toss. However, only a nominated player may deputise for the absent captain at the toss.

LAW 2 – The umpires (previously Law 3)

The most significant change to this Law is in relation to the suspension of play. If one umpire thinks that conditions are dangerous or unreasonable, then play will be suspended. Previously, both umpires had to agree to suspend play. Similarly, both umpires must agree that conditions are safe for play to be resumed. These changes follow a recent court case in the UK and legal advice received by M.C.C. Under the previous Law, if an incident occurred after one umpire thought that play should be suspended but the other thought it was safe, the latter could potentially be subject to a negligence claim.

There is also more clarification of what might constitute unreasonable conditions, with a return of some of the wording from the Law prior to the changes made in 2010.

The changes in Law 2.3 deal with arrangements and what is to be agreed at the toss, which clarifies that it is the umpires who will determine the outcomes, having discussed the issues with the captains. This Law now absorbs the previous Law 15.2 (Agreement of intervals), so it is in a more logical place.

The Law now clarifies that an umpire may revoke any decision, not just in response to an appeal (moved from Law 27.9) and that multiple signals should be given in the order in which the events occurred.

The new signals stemming from Level 3 and Level 4 offences under Law 42 are included.

LAW 3 – The scorers (previously Law 4)

There are no material changes to this Law.

LAW 4 – The ball (previously Law 5)

The previous Law 5.4 stated that a new ball could be taken after not less than 75 overs had been bowled, but left it up to the appropriate Governing Body to decide. This meant that a playing condition always had to be written to clarify this area. A change has therefore been made, stating that a new ball can be taken after 80 overs, which is the figure conventionally used around the world. This change negates the need for a playing regulation, unless the number of overs is going to be different from 80.

LAW 5 – The bat & Appendix B (previously Law 6 & Appendix E)

It has been decided to limit the size of the edge of the bat and also its overall depth. Law 5 defines the permitted size of the bat, with the width and length unchanged, but with added restrictions on the thickness of the edges (40mm) and the overall depth (67mm). Appendix B defines the size and shape of the bat gauge, which umpires can use to check a bat's legality. This gauge is fractionally larger than the permitted size of the bat, to allow for permitted covering, such as an anti-scuff front. The gauge allows for the traditional slightly curved face of a bat resulting from the pressing process.

A full report by M.C.C. into the balance of the game, which led to these changes, can be read on the Club's website or by **clicking here**.

Junior bats

In an attempt to reduce the cost of junior bats, lamination (the gluing of two or more pieces of wood) will now be allowed in the blade. This will allow manufacturers to use more off-cuts in bats for juniors, hopefully reducing the price.

Following Cricket Australia's playing regulation allowing the use of coloured bats – not currently allowed under the Laws – in the Big Bash, such bats will now be allowed for juniors as another means of attracting them to the game, provided that the bats do not discolour the ball.

A new category of bat, Type D, is therefore introduced, for bats of size 6 or smaller (32 inches or 81.3cm), which will allow laminated and coloured bats for use only in junior cricket.

There has been some movement of wording, in both directions, between the Law and the Appendix to try to make things clearer but without changing the end result.

LAW 6 – The pitch (previously Law 7)

There is one material change to this Law. When an artificial pitch is adjacent to a turf one being used, and its boundary is within 5 feet of the middle stumps of the turf pitch, there is clarification that the pitch ends at the join between the artificial pitch and the turf pitch. This is necessary because the new No ball Law creates a No ball when a ball's first bounce is off the pitch.

LAW 7 – The creases (previously Law 9)

There are no material changes to this Law.

LAW 8 – The wickets

There has been some criticism of the lengths of the pitches used in junior cricket, saying the distance laid down in the Laws is too long, but there is conflicting advice and research as to how long the pitches should be for each age group.

Consequently, the length of adult pitches is still defined. However, the length of the pitches for junior cricket should be agreed by the Governing Body for the match – this would most likely follow any guidelines set by the National Board in each country.

In response to injuries sustained by wicket-keepers in particular, Law 8.3.4. allows specially designed mechanisms which tether the bails to the stumps, thereby restricting the distance that they can fly off the stumps, but without limiting their ability to be dislodged. Such devices would need the approval of the appropriate Governing Body, which may be done nationally or more locally.

LAW 9 – Preparation and maintenance of the playing area (previously Law 10)

As a result of minor changes to Laws 11 (Intervals) and 15 (Declaration & forfeiture), it is no longer necessary to have the previous Law 10.1(e) (Insufficient time to complete rolling) in the Laws; hence it has been removed.

LAW 10 – Covering the pitch (previously Law 11)

Full covering of the pitch is to be allowed as standard, now that most grounds have full covers; the previous Law only allowed the ends to be covered, meaning playing conditions had to state that the whole pitch may be covered. This Law needed to be modernised and has been done so as to include the covering of bowlers' run ups, where possible.

There is a minor amendment confirming that, after the toss in a multi-day match, the covers should be removed as soon as practicable on each day.

LAW 11 – Intervals & LAW 12 – Start of play; cessation of play (formerly Laws 15 & 16)

The changes to these Laws are described together as they are linked.

The previous Laws allowed play to continue for up to half an hour when 9 wickets were down at the time for the tea interval; also if a wicket fell within 2 minutes of an interval, the interval would be taken immediately.

It was felt that the principle of 9 wickets down should apply to the lunch interval as well and so this change is made in Law 11.7.

The time in Law 12.5, when an interval is taken before the agreed time, is extended from 2 minutes to 3 minutes, to be consistent with the Timed out Law (a new batsman has 3 minutes to be ready to face the next delivery) and in an attempt to save playing time.

The agreements made at the toss about the intervals have been moved to Law 2.3.

The title of Law 11.3 has been changed to "Allowance for interval between innings" and there is no longer a need to cross-refer to the Law about there being insufficient time to complete rolling. This is because, if a captain declares the innings closed less than 10 minutes from the end of an interval or interruption, it is clarified that the next innings will commence 10 minutes later. This does away with the need for an extra allowance for rolling and stops a captain attempting to rush the opposition into getting ready to bat at the end of an interval.

Law 12.6 concerns the last hour of the match and the number of overs to be bowled. There is currently confusion in this area, even though it is rare for sides to bowl more than twenty overs in an hour. Assuming the close of play is 7.00pm, and the last hour is not called until 6.05pm, it is now clarified that, for additional overs to the minimum 20 to be bowled, the 20 overs must be completed by 7.00pm, not 7.05pm, and the scheduled close of play remains 7pm or once the minimum 20 overs have been bowled, whichever is later.

LAW 13 – Innings (previously Law 12)

There are no material changes to this Law.

LAW 14 – The follow-on (previously Law 13)

It is clarified that, once made, the decision to enforce the follow-on cannot be changed.

LAW 15 – Declaration and forfeiture (previously Law 14)

It is clarified that, once made, the decision to declare or forfeit an innings cannot be changed.

A cross reference to the old Law 10.1(e) (Insufficient time to complete rolling) has been removed.

LAW 16 – The result (previously Law 21)

A cross reference to the new player behaviour protocols in Law 42 is included in Law 16.3 (Umpires awarding a match), in case a captain refuses to remove one of his/her players from the field.

The wording defining a Tie and a Draw has been altered in Law 16.5. This is done to improve the descriptions, clarifying that the Draw is classed as a result, whereas previously it was the failure to get a result.

LAW 17 – The over (previously Law 22)

There is one very minor change to this Law. Law 17.3 is the Law that determines whether a ball shall count as one in the over. More precise wording is provided in 17.3.2.5 as it is not the award of penalty runs which triggers the ball not counting in an over, it is the application of the Law when penalty runs occur.

LAW 18 - Scoring runs

The Lost ball Law has been deleted from the Laws. Therefore, the references to runs scored from Lost ball have been deleted. When the umpires consider a ball to be lost, runs scored are those runs completed plus the run in progress if the batsmen had crossed at the time when Dead ball is called, as outlined in Law 18.9.

For deliberate short runs (Law 18.5), the first and final warning when deliberate short runs have occurred has been removed, since this is considered as cheating and should therefore carry an immediate penalty without a warning.

A new section (18.10 Crediting of runs scored) clarifies in a more appropriate place how runs are scored. Note that the scoring of Byes and Leg byes from deliveries which are No balls is discussed later.

Laws 18.11 and 18.12 have been tidied up, concerning to which ends the batsmen should go in specific circumstances.

LAW 19 - Boundaries

This Law defines what constitutes a boundary, what is meant by a fielder being beyond a boundary and how boundaries are scored.

Laws 19 (Boundaries) & 32 (Caught) had become somewhat mixed up during various amendments of the 2000 Code, so both have been rationalised and separated.

Replacing a boundary that has been moved during play and arrangements for sightscreens on the field of play have both been tidied up. Such a sightscreen will now need to have an area marked out which covers every possible position of the sightscreen during play, so that the boundary does not change when the screen is moved.

All airborne fielders making their first contact with the ball will need to have taken off from within the boundary, otherwise a boundary is scored.

The previous Law restricted the first player touching the ball, if airborne, to taking off within the boundary, whilst allowing any other subsequent fielders making contact with the ball to jump from beyond the boundary. It was felt wrong that a second fielder beyond the boundary could jump up, parry the ball back into the field of play, and then land again well beyond the boundary. The new Law specifies a principle that is applicable to all fielders touching the ball.

Furthermore, a fielder standing beyond the boundary will not be allowed deliberately to support or push another fielder to prevent that fielder going beyond the boundary. The intention here is important, as two fielders could accidentally touch each other after both have dived to stop or catch a ball. If the fielder with the ball is within the boundary but is accidentally touching another fielder who is grounded beyond the boundary, this does not count as a boundary.

There is a new paragraph (19.2.7) dealing with animals or spectators entering the field of play, which places the onus on the umpires to decide whether or not a boundary would have been scored.

LAW 20 – Dead ball (previously Law 23)

Law 20.1 has been adjusted to take account of the removal of Lost ball; instead, either umpire will call and signal Dead ball when satisfied that the ball in play cannot be recovered. Furthermore, the ball will no longer become dead if it becomes trapped in the helmet worn by a fielder.

In 20.4.2.2, the word 'possibly' has been added for when a serious injury occurs, as the umpires might not know at the time how serious the injury actually is. If they think the injury is possibly serious, they should call and signal Dead ball.

LAW 21 – No ball (previously Law 24)

This Law defines a fair delivery and specifies sanctions for an unfair delivery. Although the previous Law disallowed underarm bowling, there was no penalty for it, so the new Law 21.3 introduces a penalty which is equivalent to that for a thrown delivery.

In the modern game, where suspect bowling actions tend to be reported after the game rather than called immediately, the second and final warning has been withdrawn. Any delivery called on the field of play is likely to be a clear 'throw', which will incur a first and final warning, before suspension if repeated.

Section 7 of this Law, covering a ball bouncing more than twice or rolling along the ground, has been amended. The change means that it will be a No ball if the ball bounces more than **once** before reaching the popping crease. This brings the Law in line with the professional game, and what is commonly agreed in competent recreational cricket, after bowlers deliberately started to bowl balls which bounced twice, which was not a good spectacle for the game. Furthermore, when a ball lands off the pitch or hits the join between an adjacent artificial pitch and turf, then No ball will be called and signalled immediately.

LAW 21 – No ball (previously Law 24)

continued

Law 21.9 is a new section, which states that No ball and Dead ball are to be called immediately if a fielder intercepts a delivery before it reaches the striker. This situation was not previously covered in the Law, and M.C.C had received several queries about what to do when this had actually occurred.

A new Law 21.10 is introduced, titled 'Ball bouncing over head height of striker', which clarifies that such balls are to be called as No balls. This is not a change of policy – rather it is better placed in this Law than its original position in Law 42.6 of the previous Code.

The list in Law 21.11 includes a new offence, covered in detail in Law 41.8, when the umpire considers the bowler has bowled a deliberate front foot No ball.

The previous Law 24.10 specified that an umpire should revoke a No ball call if the ball does not leave the bowler's hand for any reason. Law 21.12 now specifies all of the situations when an umpire should revoke a call of No ball.

Law 21.16 clarifies that Byes and Leg byes off a No ball will be credited as such, rather than as No ball extras. So, for example, if a No ball goes for 4 Leg byes, it will be recorded as one No ball extra and 4 Leg byes, with appropriate signals. Previously, this would have been recorded as 5 No ball extras.

Law 21.18 (Out from a No ball) has changed now that Handled the ball has been absorbed into Obstructing the field. Therefore, Handled the ball needed to be removed from the ways of being out from a No ball.

LAW 22 – Wide ball (previously Law 25)

Under the previous Law, a Wide was deemed to be bowled at the instant of delivery, whereas Hit wicket could occur at any time after the bowler had entered the delivery stride. The Law has been amended to bring these two times in line, to avoid the problem of when a striker hits his/her wicket after the bowler enters the delivery stride, but before the instant of delivery when the delivery became a Wide. A delivery will now be deemed to have been a Wide from the instant the bowler enters the delivery stride. This will not have an effect on whether or not the batsman is dismissed, but it could be important if it happened when the scores were level.

The Law has also clarified that a call of Wide should be revoked if the ball touches the striker's bat or person, whilst the striker is receiving and playing at the ball.
Unlike the change in Law 21.16 for runs resulting from a No ball, there is no change to this part of the Wide Law, with all runs off a Wide being debited against the bowler, except for any award of 5 Penalty runs.

LAW 23 – Bye and Leg bye (previously Law 26)

Under the previous Law, any Byes or Leg byes which occurred off No balls, and indeed any Byes which occurred off Wides, were scored wholly as No ball extras or Wides, as appropriate.

However there are several instances of No balls being called for offences that are not the bowler's fault, so it was felt unfair to penalise the bowler in these situations when Byes or Leg byes occur.

A change has therefore been made. When a No ball has been bowled, one run is recorded for the No ball, as a No ball extra; any other runs are scored either as runs to the striker (when the ball hits the bat) or as Byes or Leg byes, as appropriate. This is more logical and is easier for umpires to signal and for the scorers to record. This means that scorecards will reflect how many No balls a bowler has actually bowled, rather than the total number of No ball extras conceded by the bowler.

Whilst the benefit of recording runs off a No ball in this way is widely appreciated, applying the same principle to a Wide ball was not felt to be appropriate. If a Wide delivery goes to the boundary, then it is more likely to be the bowler's fault and so it will continue to be recorded as 5 Wides against the bowler.

LAW 24 – Fielder's absence; substitutes (previously part of Law 2)

The previous Law 2 contained a great deal of information and it has been decided to split it into two different Laws – one relating to batting and one to fielding. Law 24 relates to the fielding side.

A substitute fielder may now act as a wicket-keeper with the consent of the umpires. It was felt that, if the original wicket-keeper was genuinely injured, then a substitute should be allowed to take over, but that the umpires should control the situation to prevent abuse. A substitute still cannot bowl, bat or act as captain.

If a player is absent while his/her side is fielding, unless in exceptional circumstances or if the absence was caused by an external blow during the match, that player will incur Penalty time equivalent to the total time spent off the field, which is the time he/she will have to spend on the field before being able to bowl or, if the innings ended meanwhile, bat. The rolling over into the batting innings is a new concept for the Laws, as is the differentiation of an external blow, which is easier for the umpires to monitor. The player must 'serve' the same time that he/she was absent, to a maximum of 90 minutes. Unlike the previous Law, however, there is no grace time at all (a player under the 2000 Code could be off the field for up to 15 minutes without penalty), meaning a player who leaves the field for one over cannot come back onto the field and immediately bowl.

The concept of cumulative penalty time has been more clearly defined and, as a new policy, unexpired penalty time is carried forward into the next day's play, to prevent abuse the previous evening going unpunished.

The Law also covers the situation where a substitute is temporarily removed from the field for a Level 3 offence (see Law 42), particularly in relation to the Penalty time that will accrue for the player he/she was replacing.

LAW 25 – Batsman's innings; runners (previously part of Law 2)

As was mentioned in the commentary on Law 24, any Penalty time accrued for being absent from the field during a previous innings will be carried over to the batting innings. A player cannot bat until his/her Penalty time has been served, or until his/her team has lost five wickets. This has previously been included in professional playing conditions but never within the Laws. The change prevents an opening batsman leaving the field towards the end of the fielding innings to rest before his/her own innings.

A runner shall be allowed if the umpires are satisfied that the batsman has sustained an injury that affects his/her ability to run. This tightens the circumstances when a runner is to be allowed.

It is clarified that only a nominated player may act as the runner and he/she must not have any unserved Penalty time resulting from Law 24.

The Law still clarifies that a runner should be someone who has already batted but adds that, if that is not possible, then the runner should be changed as soon as it does become possible. This would mean that, if one of the opening batsmen had a runner and his/her partner was dismissed first, the outgoing batsman would need to become the runner.

When there is an injured striker, the runner at square leg must have some part of his/her person or bat behind the popping crease until the ball reaches the striker, which prevents the runner from 'backing-up' to gain an advantage. Runs will be disallowed if the runner leaves early, in a similar way to how illegal leg-byes are treated, and 5 Penalty runs are also awarded.

LAW 26 - Practice on the field (previously Law 17)

This Law has been rationalised to make it less prescriptive and giving the umpires more control as to what should be allowed.

There must still never be any practice on the pitch itself. There shall not be any practice on the rest of the square, except with the approval of the umpires.

The requirement remains that any practice must not cause damage to the ball or to the pitch and must not waste time.

It was felt that the penalty for breaches of this Law should be the same for the batting and fielding sides, so there is a 5 run penalty for both batting and fielding contraventions.

LAW 27 – The wicket-keeper (previously Law 40)

There are no material changes to this Law.

LAW 28 – The fielder (previously Law 41)

Law 28.2 deals with illegal fielding and, as a result of confusion within the previous Law, clarification was required between when a fielder intentionally uses a piece of equipment or clothing to field the ball, or discards it intentionally, and when it accidentally falls off him/her. If the piece of equipment is then struck by the ball, it is not illegal fielding if the discarding/falling had been accidental or unintentional. It is irrelevant whether the ball's coming into contact with the equipment was accidental – the key factor in the passage of play is how the equipment ended up on the ground. The reason for this is that a fielder should not be able wilfully to put something on the ground which could potentially stop the ball.

LAW 29 – The wicket is down (previously Law 28)

There are no material changes to this Law.

LAW 30 - Batsman out of his/her ground (previously Law 29)

This Law defines when a batsman is in or out of his/her ground, for use in conjunction with Laws 38 (Run out) and Law 39 (Stumped).

Since 2013, the Law has provided protection to a batsman from being Run out if his/her foot has been grounded beyond the popping crease, he/she has continued forward momentum and the wicket is put down at an instant where both feet are off the ground. However, this protection has not extended to any other part of the body or to the bat.

With current technology able to assess line judgements frame by frame, and for consistency and fairness, it was felt that a batsman needs further protection. Consequently, if the batsman grounds the bat (held by the hand) or another part of his/her person within his/her ground (the elbow when diving, for example), and **provided that the batsman has continued forward momentum**, and subsequently inadvertently loses this contact with the ground when the wicket is put down, the batsman will be protected from being Run out in the same way as under the previous Law. In addition, the same protection will apply to a striker diving back into his/her ground to avoid being Stumped.

The most common instances when this will be needed are when a batsman has dived for his/her ground or when the bat hits a bump while 'running it in' and becomes airborne. It was felt that, once the batsman has gained his/her ground, and has continued forward momentum, he/she should be protected. Furthermore, it will be easier for umpires to interpret this Law. The Law requires that the batsman is 'running or diving' to ensure that a batman's foot being raised in a typical stumping scenario is not protected.

LAW 31 - Appeals (previously Law 27)

Law 31.7 allows a batsman to be recalled by the umpires when he/she has left the wicket thinking he/she was out and Law 31.8 allows the captain of the fielding side to withdraw an appeal.

Although the withdrawal of an appeal had to take place before the outgoing batsman crossed the boundary, there was, under the previous Law, no time limit imposed upon Law 31.7 for when the batsman had left the wicket under a misapprehension. The appropriate moment for both situations is when the ball comes into play for the next delivery, as a batsman might well have left the field with a small boundary before the time that the umpires had discovered a problem with the 'dismissal'. This point is therefore clarified in 31.7.

If there are no further batsmen to take the field in that innings, then the time limit will be the instant the umpires leave the field.

LAW 32 - Bowled
(previously Law 30)

There are no material changes to this Law.

LAW 33 - Caught
(previously Law 32)

This Law deals with all aspects of being dismissed Caught but there has been significant overlap with Law 19 (Boundaries) in previous Codes, which developed as the agility and ingenuity of fielders brought balls previously regarded as uncatchable into play. Both Laws have been rationalised so that each deals with its own constituency.

Caught is now dealt with entirely in this Law, but refers to the concept of when a boundary is scored when necessary, but the detail of when a boundary has been scored and hence the ball is dead is dealt with under Law 19 (Boundaries).

If more than one fielder is involved in a boundary catch, the Law now states that **any** fielder making contact with the ball must either be grounded within the boundary, or his/her last contact with the ground before first touching the ball must have been within the boundary.

Also, nowhere in the Laws was a catch defined *as the ball being held in the hand or hands of a fielder* so this has now been included in 33.2.2.1.

A change has been made so that the ball can be caught after it strikes a helmet which is being worn by a fielder or the wicket-keeper. With the wearing of helmets by wicket-keepers and close fielders now compulsory at many levels of the game, it has been decided that a helmet will be deemed as being part of the fielder's person, meaning that a catch (or stumping) can be taken after the ball has struck the helmet, or become lodged in it.

LAW 34 - Hit the ball twice

Law 34.3 allows the striker to hit the ball for a second or subsequent time in defence of his/her wicket but has certain restrictions on when this is allowed and what happens following a second strike.

In the past, this Law had allowed runs under certain complicated circumstances (once there were overthrows), which were reduced in 2013, but now the change in this Code significantly simplifies the wording to make it clear that no runs are to be scored after a lawful second strike. However, the penalty for a No ball and any Penalty runs incurred not in relation to this situation, except for the ball hitting the helmet on the ground, will be awarded in line with other similar changes throughout the Laws.

LAW 35 - Hit wicket

There are no material changes to this Law.

LAW 36 - Leg before wicket

Part of Law 36.2 deals with what occurs when the ball is intercepted by the striker's person. As clarification, principally for TV slow-motion replays, an extra sub clause has been added to cover the situation where the ball appears to strike the pad and bat simultaneously.

The Law now states that, if this happens, it is to be considered as the ball hitting the bat before the striker's person and hence not to be considered for LBW.

LAW 37 - Obstructing the field

As explained earlier, it was felt sensible to merge Handled the ball into Obstructing the field. A new clause is introduced thus:

- 37.1.1 defines Obstructing the field as in the previous Law.
- 37.1.2 incorporates some of the wording from the previous Handled the ball Law, as another way of the striker being out obstructing the field.

The section on when a batsman is not out under this Law is expanded for clarification, notably if contact with the ball was accidental, was in avoiding injury or was a lawful second strike.

This will have no effect on *whether* a batsman is dismissed; rather, it is just the method of dismissal that might be changed.

LAW 38 - Run out

A batsman can now be Run out if the ball rebounds directly from a fielder's helmet onto the stumps. The changes to Law 30 (Batsman out of his/her ground) and Law 25.6 (Dismissal and conduct of a batsman and his/her runner) have resulted in significant changes to cross referencing in this Law.

LAW 39 - Stumped

In line with the changes to Law 33 (Caught) and, as the wearing of a helmet by a wicket-keeper is now compulsory when standing up to the stumps at many levels of cricket, the restriction on a stumping not being allowed if the ball rebounds from the helmet has been lifted.

LAW 40 - Timed out (previously Law 31)

There is no change to the wording but this Law has been moved to end of the dismissals, which were otherwise in alphabetical order.

LAW 41 - Fair and unfair play (previously Law 42)

There are several clauses which have been amended to this long Law on Fair and unfair play. The main changes are as follows and are broken down by section.

Law 41.3 The match ball – changing its condition

This is the Law that deals with illegal damage to the match ball and it clarifies how a fielder may polish a ball.

The new Law states that any cloth used to dry the ball must now have the approval of the umpires.

The new Law also covers the possibility of the batsmen deliberately damaging the ball, which is a rare but possible scenario.

When the umpires consider the condition of the ball has been unfairly changed, the opposing side will now have the option of the ball being changed or not. Whether or not the ball is changed, the penalties and subsequent reporting procedures remain the same, except that, following a team's second offence, the bowler who bowled the previous ball will be suspended from bowling for the remainder of the match. Previously, it was just for the remainder of the innings..

Law 41.4 Deliberate attempt to distract the striker

This is the Law that deals with the deliberate distraction of the striker *before or as* he/she faces a delivery. This Law previously allowed for a first and final warning but, because this is deliberate unfair play, this warning has been removed and five Penalty runs will be awarded for the first and subsequent offences.

This is consistent with Law 41.5, which deals with equivalent offences *after* the striker has received the ball.

Law 41.5 Deliberate distraction, deception or obstruction of batsman

This is the Law that prevents a fielder from deliberately distracting or obstructing a batsman *after* receiving the ball. An increasing practice considered unfair is 'mock fielding', where a fielder feigns to field the ball and/or feigns to throw a non-existent ball in an attempt to prevent the batsmen running. Therefore, the words 'deceive' and 'deception' have been added to this Law to cover both mock fielding and any other act which deliberately aims to deceive the batting side.

Law 41.6 to 41.8 - Dangerous and unfair bowling

These clauses deal with all types of dangerous and unfair bowling, including high full tosses. Due to the increasing concerns over players' safety, it was felt appropriate to tighten up these Laws and provide additional guidance as to when bowling is dangerous or unfair.

Two major changes from the previous Code are

- to separate short-pitched deliveries and high full-pitched deliveries (now 'non-pitching deliveries') into separate sections and
- to reduce the level of tolerance for each.

For bouncers, aimed at the body or head of the striker, repetition is no longer a pre-requisite for a delivery to be considered dangerous. There are several factors listed in Law 41.6 which the umpire should consider.

LAW 41 - Fair and unfair play (previously Law 42)

continued

For non-pitching deliveries, *all* deliveries, irrespective of their speed, which pass above waist height of the upright striker are to trigger the sanctions. Previously, the umpire had to judge the speed of the delivery, with slow balls being allowed up to shoulder height.

The warning sequence for each type of delivery is separate, but the initial warning is dispensed with and only a first and final warning will be given for each type of dangerous bowling before the bowler is suspended.

The bowling of over head-height bouncers is moved to Law 21 (No ball), but repetitive such deliveries can be considered unfair and trigger a warning and action under Law 41.6.

A new clause 41.8 covers the bowling of a deliberate front foot No ball, which will lead to immediate suspension from bowling, in the same way as a deliberate beamer. It is felt that a bowler deliberately 'running through the crease' and releasing the ball from closer to the striker can be very dangerous and deserved a harsh punishment.

Laws 41.11 to Law 41.15 – Damaging the pitch

These 5 clauses of Law 41 address the various situations where members of either side can cause damage to the pitch and specifically the protected area, and have been reordered and revised to improve clarity for players and help to umpires in dispensing sanctions associated with such breaches. An allowance of Penalty runs not related to the offence has been included where appropriate, as across other Laws.

A new Clause 41.15 (Striker in the protected area) has been added to stop a striker actually taking guard within the protected area, or so close to it that he/she will usually encroach when playing the ball. It does not stop a batsman coming down the pitch to play the ball from the protected area. Penalties for this are as for the Batsman damaging the pitch. The bowler is heavily punished for encroaching into the protected area and it is felt that the batsman's movements into that area should be restricted where reasonably possible.

Law 41.16 – Non striker leaving his/her ground early

This was previously Law 42.15 and is the Law that enables the bowler to run out the non-striker before delivery. In the light of much publicity and controversy, this Law has been thoroughly debated, with two changes being made:

- Extending the point at which the run out of the non-striker can be attempted to the instant at which the bowler would be expected to deliver the ball. This will have the effect of keeping the non-striker in his/her ground for longer.
- Changing the title of the Law, to put the onus on the non-striker to remain in his/her ground. It is often the bowler who is criticised for attempting such a run out but it is the batsman who is attempting to gain an advantage. The message to the non-striker is very clear – if you do not want to risk being run out, stay within your ground until the bowler has released the ball.

The extension of the timeframe for the run out has been in place for some time in the international game and the Law change is in line with this.

Law 41.19 – Unfair actions

This Law, previously 42.18, has been bolstered and gives the umpires power to warn players for unfair conduct and, on subsequent instances, award 5 penalty runs to the opposition. This would cover any incident not covered by the new offences outlined in Law 42 below.

LAW 42 - Players' conduct (New Law)

This is a new Law that deals specifically with players' misconduct and is introduced following widespread consultation, surveys with players and umpires and a series of trials of the different levels of sanctions.

It is widely accepted that there is a need both to provide the umpires with appropriate on-field sanctions to deal with deteriorating levels of behaviour, not just to report such matters, and that there should be different levels of sanction leading to sending off for acts of violence.

Four different levels of offences have been created, with Level 4 being the most serious. The umpires shall determine into which of the Levels an unfair action falls and will apply the appropriate sanction. The four levels of sanction are set as:

Level 1: Warning then 5 penalty runs to the opposition for a repeat offence.

Level 2: 5 Penalty runs to the opposition.

Level 3: Offending player is suspended for a number of overs, depending on the length of the match, plus 5 Penalty runs to the opposition.

Level 4: Offending player is removed from the field for the rest of the match, plus 5 Penalty runs to the opposition.

All breaches, including the first offence under Level 1, will attract a report to the Executive of the Team(s) and the Governing Body.

For all offences under Level 1-4, the umpire will call Time and summon the relevant captain, who will be informed of the breach of Law and the associated penalty. If appropriate, the umpire will instruct the captain to remove the offending player from the field.

New signals for Level 3 and Level 4 offences have been created, which are covered in Law 2.13. The signal for each offence is made to the scorers, not the player, and starts with the umpire putting an arm out to the side of the body and repeatedly raising it and lowering it. For Level 3 offences, this is followed by raising both hands, all fingers spread, to shoulder height, palms facing towards the scorers. For Level 4 offences, the first part is followed by raising an index finger, held at shoulder height, to the side of the body.

In the, hopefully unlikely, event that a Captain refuses to comply with the umpires' instructions under Level 3 or 4 then they will consider awarding the match if one captain is involved or abandoning the match if both refuse to comply and it is impossible to resolve matters. This is covered in Law 42.6.

Law 42.7 clarifies that, if it is the wicket-keeper who is suspended or sent off, a substitute will not be allowed to keep-wicket. It also makes clear that, if the Level 3 or 4 offence is committed by a substitute or a runner, the player for whom they are fielding / running will be affected by the punishment.

This system is designed to give the umpires on-field penalties to tackle poor behaviour. However, as with other penalties under the Laws, these new sanctions are intended as deterrents, the presence of which should reduce the frequency of poor behaviour, so that they would only rarely be applied.

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