



ECB guidance for children to play cricket. Adopted by Stour Provost Cricket Club

ECB Guidance on the Wearing of Cricket Helmets (“Head protectors”) by Young Players

Since 2000 the ECB has issued safety guidance on the wearing of helmets by young players up to the age of 18.

This guidance applies to all players up to the age of 18, both in open age group cricket and in all junior cricket played with a hard cricket ball. The guidance also applies during all practice sessions. Any individual taking responsibility for players should take all reasonable steps to ensure this guidance is followed at all times.

With the assistance of schools, cricket clubs leagues and umpires, the wearing of helmets by young players is now standard practice in cricket throughout England and Wales. Helmets are widely available and are covered by a British Standard (BS7928:1998) and a new specification, for head protectors on sale from Spring/Summer 2014 (BS7928/2013) – see below.

A face protector represents an alternative head protection system for young wicket keepers. Wicketkeeper face protectors are covered by British Standard (BS7929 – 2 :2009).

Helmets with a faceguard or grille should be worn when batting against a hard cricket ball in matches and in practice sessions. Wicket keepers should wear a helmet with a faceguard, or a wicketkeeper face protector, when standing up to the stumps.

All young players should regard a helmet with a faceguard as a normal item of protective equipment when batting, together with pads, gloves and, for boys, an abdominal protector (box). All young wicketkeepers should regard a helmet with a faceguard or a face protector as a normal part of their protective equipment together with pads, gloves and, for boys, an abdominal protector (box).

There is no exception to be granted in this regard, in any form of cricket.

The ECB asks that this guidance is communicated to the parents, or guardians, of all young players through clubs and schools, and that young players are not allowed to bat or stand up to the stumps when keeping wicket against a hard ball without wearing appropriate protection.

Update: In March 2014 the following guidance was issued. This applies to head protectors worn by all cricketers.

NEW CRICKET HEAD PROTECTOR TESTING STANDARD (More commonly known as the Helmet testing standard)

The ECB, PCA and the ICC have worked with BSi and head protector manufacturers to develop a new specification for the testing of head protection for cricketers. This specification [was] approved by BSi Group, which is the national body responsible for producing appropriate safety standards in the UK.

With cricketers and bowling machines able to deliver cricket balls at high speeds, and given the obvious importance of protecting against head injuries wherever possible, head protectors are an essential part of a cricketer’s kit.

It is important that individuals understand how the new specification [has applied] to head protectors on sale from Spring/ Summer 2014. The key features of the new specification, **BS7928:2013**, are:

1. it now includes a facial contact projectile test that assesses for penetration of the ball through the faceguard, and contact of the faceguard onto the face, using realistic ball impact speeds and conditions; and
2. head protectors have been tested separately against men’s and junior sized cricket balls (a five-and-a-half ounce ball and a four-and-three-quarter ounce ball, respectively).

Head protectors that have been tested against the new standard will be clearly labelled with “BS7928:2013” and will contain clear labelling setting out whether a head protector has been tested against

- (i) men's standard ball size of 5 ½ ounces,
- (ii) (ii) junior standard ball size of 4 ¾ ounces, or
- (iii) (iii) both men's and junior size balls.

The manufacturers have advised that there is currently no specific women's head protector and so there is no specific standard for women's cricket head protectors. As the size of the standard women's cricket ball is between the standard men and junior balls, it is recommended that women use head protectors that have been tested against both the men's and junior sized ball or at least against the junior size ball (as the smaller ball could potentially get through the gap above the face guard on a men's head protector).

From 30 June 2014, the old BSI standard for cricket head protectors (BS7928:1998) [was] withdrawn and the ECB therefore recommends that all new head protectors brought to market are tested against the new standard.

However, head protectors which have already been tested against the old standard can and will continue to be available for sale and will not be withdrawn from the market.

In light of this, the ECB has issued this guidance to ensure that the public understands the meaning and merits of the new specification (and consequent labelling that will soon be introduced) and therefore to enable the public to make an informed decision as to which head protector to use.

Finally, whilst the ECB considers that head protectors are an essential part of a cricketer's kit to mitigate the risk of injury, it must be remembered that wearing a head protector and faceguard (whether or not it has been tested against the new standard) cannot always prevent death, injury or disability.

For further information, please contact helmets@ecb.co.uk

ECB Fielding Regulations

For reference, the ECB fielding Regulations are as follows:

- No young player in the Under 15 age group, or younger, shall be allowed to field closer than 8 yards (7.3 metres) from the middle stump, except behind the wicket on the off side, until the batsman has played at the ball
- For players in the Under 13 age group, and below, the distance is 11 yards (10 metres)
- These minimum distances apply even if the player is wearing a helmet
- Should a young player in these age groups come within the restricted distance the umpire must stop the game immediately and instruct the fielder to move back
- In addition any young player in the Under 16 to Under 18 age groups, who has not reached the age of 18, must wear a helmet and, for boys, an abdominal protector (box) when fielding within 6 yards (5.5 metres) of the bat, except behind the wicket on the off side. Players should wear appropriate protective equipment whenever they are fielding in a position where they feel at risk
- These fielding regulations are applicable to all cricket in England and Wales

ECB Fast Bowling Directives

The Fast Bowling Directives are designed to raise awareness of the need to nurture and protect our young fast bowlers through their formative years, and have been warmly welcomed by a significant number of coaches and managers. Statistics clearly show that fast bowlers regularly win international matches, and, if England is to achieve the vision of becoming the most successful and respected cricket nation, we must make every effort to produce bowlers to reach the goal.

I would like to thank those involved in the development of talented fast bowlers for their observations and constructive feedback regarding the initiative. As coaches, we should consider the welfare of the individuals under our supervision. These regulations are designed to minimise the possibility of injury.

The Directives relate to all competitions under the auspices of the ECB at U19 level and below as well as all Premier League matches. It should be emphasised that the age of the player is the key criteria and not the level of cricket

being played. The restrictions will be reviewed annually, and the Directives were amended slightly for the 2010 season onwards in relation to the number of overs to be bowled in matches.

Mike Gatting

Managing Director of Cricket Partnerships England and Wales Cricket Board

Injury prevention for fast bowlers

These Directives apply to girls and boys, and any reference to he/his should be interpreted to include she/her.

For the purpose of these Directives a fast bowler should be defined as a bowler to whom a wicket keeper in the same age group would, in normal circumstances, stand back to take the ball.

All coaches are urged to identify those players with the potential to bowl fast and to ensure they follow the Directives in all cricket throughout the season.

There are four main areas to be aware of when assessing injury risk to fast bowlers:

1. Overbowling
2. Technique
3. Physical Preparation
4. Equipment

1. OVERBOWLING:

This is an important consideration especially for young bowlers whose bodies are not fully developed. Recent studies have revealed that overbowling is a common cause of back injuries. Evidence suggests that much of the damage occurs early in the playing career, especially during growth spurts, though the effects do not often show themselves until the late teens. The more talented and more physically mature youngsters are generally most at risk, as they tend to play at more than one age group level.

To ensure that young fast bowlers do not place undue stress on their bodies, every attempt must be made to keep the amount of bowling within reasonable limits. The following Directives provide sensible playing and training levels.

Directives for matches:

AGE: MAX OVERS PER SPELL MAX OVERS PER DAY

Up to 13 5 overs per spell 10 overs per day

U14, U15 6 overs per spell 12 overs per day

U16, U17 7 overs per spell 18 overs per day

U18, U19 7 overs per spell 18 overs per day

Directives for practice sessions:

AGE: MAX BALLS PER SESSION MAX SESSIONS PER WEEK

Up to 13 30 balls per session 2 sessions per week

U14, U15 36 balls per session 2 sessions per week

U16, U17 36 balls per session 3 sessions per week

U18, U19 42 balls per session 3 sessions per week

For guidance it is recommended that in any seven day period a fast bowler should not bowl more than four days in that period and for a maximum of two days in a row.

Having completed a spell the bowler cannot bowl again, from either end, until the equivalent number of overs to the length of his spell have been bowled from the same end. A bowler can change ends without ending his current spell provided he bowls the next over he legally can from the other end. If this does not happen his spell is deemed to be concluded. If play is interrupted, for any reason, for less than 40 minutes any spell in progress, at the time of the interruption, can be continued after the interruption up to the maximum number of overs per spell for the appropriate age group. If the spell is not continued after the interruption the bowler cannot bowl again, from either end, until the equivalent number of overs to the length of his spell before the interruption have been bowled from the same end. If the interruption is of 40 minutes or more, whether scheduled or not, the bowler can commence a new spell immediately.

Once a bowler covered by these Directives has bowled in a match he cannot exceed the maximum number of overs per day for his age group even if he subsequently bowls spin. He can exceed the maximum overs per spell if bowling spin, but cannot then revert to bowling fast until an equivalent number of overs to the length of his spell have been bowled from the same end. If he bowls spin without exceeding the maximum number of overs in a spell the maximum will apply as soon as he reverts to bowling fast.

Nets:

Outdoor: The emphasis on all nets should be quality rather than quantity. These Directives will encourage young fast bowlers to focus their efforts on shorter, more intensive spells. Consequently young fast bowlers should be made aware of the importance of warming up and warming down as part of their preparation.

Indoor: In the period between the end of the cricket season and Christmas, indoor practise for fast bowlers should be kept to an ABSOLUTE MINIMUM. The following highlights the risk of playing/practising on hard surfaces such as solid concrete and shows how these forces can be reduced by using appropriate mats or indeed by practising on grass. Concrete offers 0% force absorption whereas grass can offer up to 75%. The 34% offered by natural turf was measured at Trent Bridge on a rock hard Test Match pitch. These figures have major implications for limiting indoor work in the winter, particularly for seamers, and for ensuring that length and intensity of sessions are considered when working on the harder surfaces.

Force absorption and surfaces:

Concrete 0% force reduction

Uniturf on concrete: 7% force reduction

Uniturf + mat: 15% force reduction

Uniturf + 2 mats: 31% force reduction

Natural turf: 34% force reduction

Synthetic + underlay: 49% force reduction

2. TECHNIQUE:

It is crucial that bowlers are encouraged to adopt a safe action early in their development. Bowlers should either have a SIDE-ON, a FRONT-ON or a 'MIDWAY/NEUTRAL' action, but SHOULD NEVER MIX THE ACTIONS. The mixed actions (of which there are two main types) are a major cause of back injuries, because they cause an unnecessary spinal twist. Excessive hyperextension of the back during the delivery stride is also a contributing factor.

For further clarification of mixed actions consult the 'ECB Coaches Manual' or an appropriately qualified cricket coach.

3. PHYSICAL PREPARATION:

A well structured, cricket specific training programme is essential to develop, and maintain, the strength, endurance and flexibility required for fast bowling. It is one of the most injury-labile non-contact activities in sport and the need for the fast bowlers to be amongst the fittest and best prepared players in the team cannot be over emphasised. Bowlers should WARM UP and STRETCH thoroughly before bowling and training, and should WARM DOWN and STRETCH afterwards. A good warm up helps to encourage a more professional approach, helps team spirit and can actually improve performance. It also helps to reduce the chance of an injury occurring.

4. EQUIPMENT:

Impact forces of up to eight times body weight can be experienced during the delivery stride. Without the appropriate footwear, these forces must be absorbed by the feet, ankles, knees and lower back of the bowler. It is therefore essential that bowlers minimise these effects by absorbing them with the use of efficient, well-fitting, cushioned boots or shoes and if required, absorbent insoles. The use of running shoes, basketball-type boots or good cross trainers is also essential as they are designed to cope with the types of forces experienced when bowling on hard surfaces.

The year starting date of midnight on the previous 31st August is assumed throughout these Directives.