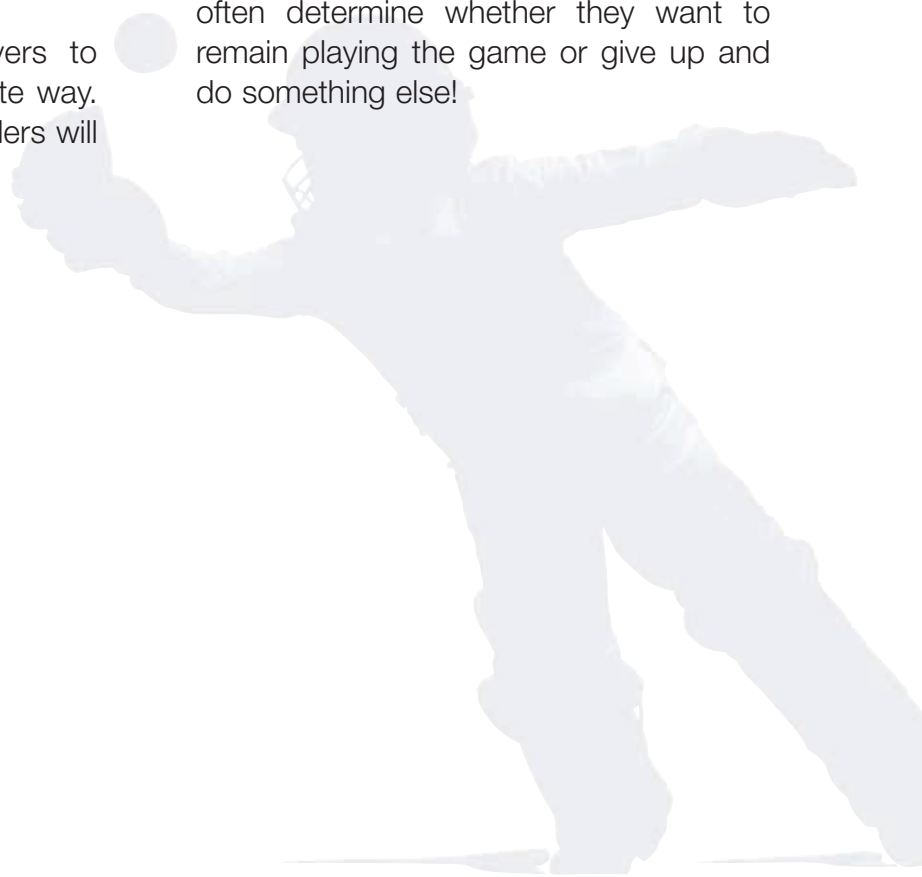


# ECB Guidelines for the selection of young players in adult cricket

The ECB has issued new guidance covering the participation of young players in adult cricket. The following guidance is designed to help clubs to decide when to select young players in adult teams and how best to help their cricketing development when they play in adult matches.

1. Making the step up from junior to adult cricket is a significant event in any player's cricket experience. Ensure that the player's safety, personal development needs and overall cricket experience are considered.
2. There is no definitive age at which they should be introduced to adult cricket but determine each case on an individual basis dependent on their ability and stage of cognitive and emotional maturity to take part at this level, taking into account the ECB guidance on Junior Cricketers playing in Adult Matches.
3. ECB Fast Bowling Directives and Fielding Regulations should always be adhered to for junior players in adult cricket.
4. Provide an opportunity for players to show their talents in an appropriate way. Children who are just used as fielders will not fully experience the game.
5. Be supportive at all times for all forms of effort even when children are not successful. Try and put them in situations where they will experience some success (however small) and ensure plenty of praise and encouragement.
6. Try and involve them in all aspects of the game wherever possible i.e. socializing, team talks, practice, decision making etc. so that they feel part of the team.
7. Children will often feel more comfortable and able to perform if they have a family member or friend also playing in the side.
8. Remember, children's early experiences will remain with them always and will often determine whether they want to remain playing the game or give up and do something else!



# ECB Guidance on Junior Cricketers playing in Open Age Group Cricket

## Introduction

The ECB has issued the following guidance covering the participation of young cricketers in open age group cricket matches. This guidance applies to boys and girls and any reference to he/his should be interpreted to include she/her. Age groups are based on the age of the player at midnight on 31st August in the year preceding the current season.

## Guidance for Clubs and Leagues

All clubs must recognise that they have a duty of care towards all young players who are representing the club. This duty of care also extends to Leagues that allow the participation of young players in open age groups in their League. The duty of care should be interpreted in two ways:

- Not to place a young player in a position that involves an unreasonable risk to that young player, taking account of the circumstances of the match and the relative skills of the player.
- Not to create a situation that places members of the opposing side in a position whereby they cannot play cricket as they would normally do against adult players.

In addition the following specific requirements apply to young players in open age group cricket:

- All young players who have not reached their 18th birthday must wear a helmet with a faceguard when batting and when standing up to the stumps when keeping wicket. Parental consent not to wear a helmet should not be accepted in open age group cricket. A young player acting as a runner must also wear a helmet even if the player he is running for is not doing

so.

- The current ECB fielding regulations must be adhered to and enforced by the umpires and captain. The umpires are empowered by these fielding regulations to stop the game immediately if a young player comes within the restricted distance.
- The umpires and the opposing captain must be notified of the age group of all players participating in an open age group cricket who are in the Under 19 age group or younger even if the player is not a fast bowler. This requirement also covers any young player taking the field as a substitute fielder. The ECB Team Sheet cards are freely available to facilitate this.
- Any player in the Under 13 age group and younger must have explicit written consent from a parent or guardian before participating in open age group cricket. Clubs must ensure that their player registration procedures ensure that consent is obtained. The guidance related to changing and showering (see 'Safe Hands' – Cricket's Policy for safeguarding Children) must be adhered to.
- Any club wishing to play a player in the Under 11 age group in an open age group League or Cup match must obtain the explicit prior approval of the League or Cup management before the player can play. Approval should only be given to exceptionally talented players. It is recommended that advice is sought from the County Age Group Coach or other ECB Level 3 coach as appropriate.

Clubs and Leagues can apply more strict restrictions on the participation of young players in open age group cricket at their discretion. It is strongly recommended that a parent, guardian or other identified responsible adult is present whenever a

player in the Under 13 age group or younger plays open age group cricket. This could include the captain or other identified adult player taking responsibility for the young player.

This guidance applies to all cricket in England and Wales from the beginning of the 2007 season.

# 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, the regulations are designed to minimise the possibility of injury.

The Directives relate to all competitions under the auspices of the ECB at Under 19 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 are unchanged for the 2007 season.

## **Hugh Morris**

Deputy Chief Executive  
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

### **Directives for Matches:**

AGE:	MAX OVERS PER SPELL	MAX OVERS PER DAY
Up to 13	4 overs per spell	8 overs per day
U14, U15	5 overs per spell	10 overs per day
U16, U17	6 overs per spell	18 overs per day
U18, U19	7 overs per spell	21 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

## 1. OVERBOWLING:

This is an important consideration especially for young bowlers whose bodies are not fully developed. Recent studies have revealed that overbowling is the most common cause of back injuries in this country. Evidence suggests that much of the damage occurs early in the playing career, and 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.

These figures are based on players bowling in no more than 3 matches or practice session per week for age groups up to and including U15, and 4 matches or practice sessions per week for age groups up to and including U19. Players can play in other matches provided they do not bowl.

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 that he bowls the next over that 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 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 he 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 8 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.

# ECB safety guidance on the wearing of cricket helmets by young players

In February 2000 the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) issued safety guidance on the wearing of helmets by young players up to the age of 18. In brief, the guidance recommends that:

- helmets with a faceguard or grille should be worn when batting against a hard cricket ball in matches and in practice sessions
- 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)
- young wicket keepers should wear a helmet with a faceguard when standing up to the stumps.

With the assistance of schools, cricket clubs and leagues, 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).

The original guidance allowed parents or guardians to give their written consent to allow a young player not to wear a helmet. However now parental consent not to wear a helmet should not be accepted in any form of cricket.

A face protector represents an alternative head protection system for young wicket keepers.

Face protectors are, at the time of publication of this guidance, a relatively new innovation. ECB is currently working with manufacturers in order to achieve a British Standard in relation to all face protection technology for juniors.

In the meantime The NZ and Australian cricket helmet standard AS/NZS 4499 is the closest standard for the faceguard. The standard has three parts to it – (4499.1) the helmet (4499.2) the temple pieces and (4499.3) the grill. The nature of the product is such that the only relevant part of that standard is part 3, and not all the parts of the test apply mainly because the faceguard does not attach to a helmet.

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 that this guidance is followed at all times.

The ECB asks that the 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.

# 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.

