

The Laws of Cricket (2017 Code)

Major Changes effective from 1 October 2017

The Laws have been re-ordered into a more logical sequence and written in language applying to all persons. While there are still 42 Laws in the 2017 Code, two Laws have been deleted and two Laws added. The ***Handled the ball*** Law has been deleted and merged into ***Law 37 (Obstructing the field)*** thus reducing the number of dismissals from ten to nine. The ***Lost ball*** Law has been deleted and is now dealt with under ***Law 20 (Dead ball)***.

The following points briefly summarise some of the major changes to the Laws.

- ***Law 2 (The Umpires)*** If either umpire considers conditions are dangerous or unreasonable then play will be suspended. For play to resume both umpires must agree.
- ***Law 5 (The Bat)*** Limits are now placed on the depth and thickness of a bat which may be no more than 67mm (2.64in) in depth with 40mm (1.56in) edges. The width of a bat remains unchanged at 108mm (4.25in). Provision for junior bats for use only in junior cricket e.g. coloured bats, is now made.
- ***Law 8 (The Wickets)*** Law 8.4 has been amended to allow the tethering of bails to the stumps to help prevent injury.
- ***Law 21 (No ball)***
 - ***Law 21.7*** A ball bouncing more than once before reaching the popping crease will now be called a No ball. No ball will also be called for a bowler's delivery which lands off the pitch.
 - ***Law 21.16*** Where a No ball is bowled, Byes and Leg byes will now be recorded as such instead of No ball extras. As an example, a No ball goes for 2 Byes and is to be recorded as one No ball extra and 2 Byes. In the past this would have been scored as 3 No ball extras.
- ***Law 24 (Fielder's absence; substitutes)*** This Law now allows, with the umpires' consent, a substitute to keep wicket. The Law also amends the concept of Penalty time – for an external injury, a noticeably staved or cut finger for example, Penalty time is not incurred. For other absences from the field then Penalty time can accrue immediately up to a maximum of 90 minutes. Unserved Penalty time passes from fielding to batting (or until 5 wickets are down).
- ***Law 25 (Batsman's innings; runners)*** Under this Law a runner at square leg has to remain in his/her ground until the ball reaches the batsman or passes the popping crease. If there is a breach then any runs scored are to be disallowed similar to not allowing leg byes.
- ***Law 30 (Batsman out of his/her ground)*** A running or diving batsman is now considered in if the bat bounces up with the batsman having already made good his/her ground.

- **Law 31 (Appeals)** An appeal can be withdrawn, or a dismissed batsman recalled, before the next ball comes into play. Previously a batsman could not return once he/she had left the field of play.
- **Law 33 (Caught)** A batsman can now be caught, run out or stumped even if the ball makes contact with a helmet worn by a fielder or wicket-keeper. Similarly, a batsman can now be out caught if a ball lodges in a helmet worn by a fielder or wicket-keeper in the same way a ball lodges in a fielder's or wicket-keeper's clothing.
- **Law 41 (Unfair play)**
 - **Law 41.4** A five run penalty now applies where a fielder, such as the wicketkeeper, deliberately distracts a batsman when he/she is about to receive or is receiving a delivery.
 - **Law 41.5** Having received a delivery, if either umpire considers there has been an attempt to distract either batsman, such as mock fielding, then a five run penalty will apply.
 - **Law 41.7** Any delivery which accidentally passes above waist height of the batsman is now considered dangerous and unfair, will be called a No ball and will result in a first and final warning.
 - **Law 41.8** The bowling of a deliberate front foot No ball will now result in the bowler being suspended from bowling.
 - **Law 41.15** A batsman is now prevented from taking a stance which will encroach on the protected area.
 - **Law 41.16** The non-striker risks being Run out if he/she leaves the crease before the bowler delivers the ball.
 - **Law 41.19** If either umpire considers any action by a player, not covered by the Laws, is unfair this will result in a first and final warning. A second or subsequent offence will result in a 5 run penalty.
- **Law 42 (Players' conduct)** This is a new Law which gives the umpires various options to deal with poor on-field behaviour which can include a player or players being temporarily or permanently removed from the field of play. A separate Summary Sheet for Law 42 has been produced for issue to umpires and includes definitions of offences and a checklist for umpires to follow in the event of a Law 42 offence. Provision is also detailed in Law 42 to award or abandon a match should a Captain, or Captains, refuse to comply with the umpires' instructions where a serious offence has occurred.

It is 17 years since a new Code of the Laws has been written and since that time there have been six revisions of the Code. Given deteriorating standards of behaviour, which have caused players and umpires to leave the game, a legal judgement affecting ground, weather and light, and how the game itself has changed since 2000, the new Code now aims to simplify the Laws, be understandable to all and to minimise misconduct.