



MCC STATEMENT ON ICC'S PLAYING REGULATION CHANGES

Date released: 3rd October 2011

On 1st October 2011, the International Cricket Council introduced certain new Playing Conditions which are applicable to international cricket. It is important to note that the Laws of Cricket have not changed and so the changes made by the ICC will not be replicated at levels beneath international cricket.

Some of the changes will create confusion with the cricket playing public and so MCC felt it would be sensible to make the following points very clear to cricket fans around the world. Unless it is stressed that the changes are only relevant for international cricket, people will think that the changes are applicable to them in their club or school matches.

To hear MCC's Laws Manager, Fraser Stewart, discuss the implications of the changes, [click here](#).

LAW 2.1 (SUBSTITUTES AND RUNNERS)

The new ICC Playing Condition bans the use of a runner.

The Laws of Cricket have not changed and a runner is still allowed for a player who has been injured or become ill since the nomination of players, or for other wholly acceptable reasons as outlined under Law 2.1(b).

For MCC's reasoning on why it feels that runners should be retained, see [here](#).

Conclusion – runners will not be allowed in international matches but, unless expressly outlawed by a particular league or governing body, runners will continue to be allowed in all other cricket as outlined in Law 2.1. [Click here](#).



LAW 37 – OBSTRUCTING THE FIELD

This Law has not changed but ICC, after close consultation with MCC, has added a clarification in their Playing Conditions about batsmen who deliberately block throws to prevent a run out. The catalyst for this was the increasing occurrence in international cricket of batsmen running from one side of the pitch to the other side, solely to try to get their bodies between the ball and the stumps. Not only is this causing avoidable damage to the pitch (see Law 42.14) but it is also in breach of Law 37.1, which states:

“Either batsman is out Obstructing the field if he wilfully obstructs or distracts the fielding side by word or action.”

The wording which now appears in ICC’s Playing Conditions is as follows:

“Law 37 shall apply. For the avoidance of doubt, if an umpire feels that a batsman, in running between the wickets, has significantly changed his direction without probable cause and thereby obstructed a fielder’s attempt to effect a run out, the batsman should, on appeal, be given out, obstructing the field. It shall not be relevant whether a run out would have occurred or not.

If the change of direction involves the batsman crossing the pitch, Law 42.14 shall also apply.

See also paragraph 2.4 of Appendices 2 and 3 and paragraph 5 of Appendix 5.

2.4 of Appendix 2 and 3, and paragraph 5 of Appendix 5 reads:

2.4 Obstructing the Field

- a) Following an appeal from the fielding side, the on-field umpire shall be entitled to consult with the third umpire if he feels that the batsman, in running between the wickets, may have significantly changed his direction (refer clause 37).
- b) Such consultation shall be initiated by the on-field umpire and will be done to help him decide the extent of any change in direction and whether the obstruction was wilful or not.”
- c) Following such consultation with the third umpire, the final decision shall be indicated in the normal fashion by the relevant on-field umpire.

The circumstances described in this new Playing Condition (i.e. a batsman significantly changing his direction of running without probable cause) are only one example of an action which will qualify as wilfully obstructing the field. Accordingly, it is still possible for a batsman to be given out obstructing the field in circumstances where he has not significantly changed his direction of running provided that the umpire feels that by some other actions it is clear that the batsman had intended to obstruct the field. An example might be when the striker runs straight down the middle of the pitch, which he is not allowed to do, to prevent a throw from the wicket-keeper hitting the stumps at the non-striker’s end.

The act of blocking a throw is not in itself illegal, as it can be done wholly accidentally. For a batsman to be dismissed under this Law, the umpire must feel that the batsman’s actions were made with the sole intention of preventing a run out. A detailed explanation of this area of Law is available [here](#) and ICC have also clarified the issue [here](#).

A further important clarification is that it is the obstruction that is the offence. The umpires do not have to consider whether the ball would have hit the stumps or whether the batsman may have made good his ground.



Conclusion – the following points are stressed:

- This clarification is applicable to all levels of cricket.
- Accidental obstruction will not lead to a dismissal.
- The batsman does not have a duty to avoid a throw – rather, he must not wilfully obstruct it.
- If the obstruction was wilful, it does not matter that a run-out would not have happened.
- If the batsman runs across the pitch, he will be in breach of Law 42.14. [Click here](#).

LAW 42.15

(BOWLER ATTEMPTING TO RUN OUT NON-STRIKER BEFORE DELIVERY)

The new ICC Playing Condition, shown in full below, is aimed at keeping the non-striker in his ground for longer. The new regulation states:

“The bowler is permitted, before releasing the ball and provided he has not completed his usual delivery swing, to attempt to run out the non-striker. Whether the attempt is successful or not, the ball shall not count as one of the over. If the bowler fails in an attempt to run out the non-striker, the umpire shall call and signal Dead ball as soon as possible.”

The Laws of Cricket have not changed and so, in amateur cricket, the moment after which the non-striker is safe to leave his ground remains on the landing of the bowler’s back foot in the delivery stride. Law 42.15 states:

“The bowler is permitted, before entering his delivery stride, to attempt to run out the non-striker. Whether the attempt is successful or not, the ball shall not count as one of the over. If the bowler fails in an attempt to run out the non-striker, the umpire shall call and signal Dead ball as soon as possible.”

This Law was introduced in 2000 to make it easier for umpires to monitor the non-striker’s position while also watching for the No-ball. The majority of umpires questioned by MCC find it easier to adjudicate the situation under the current Law.

In international cricket, the umpires have recourse to television replays and so do not necessarily need to pay close attention to the non-striker’s position. Umpires in non-televised games do not have this luxury and MCC consequently felt that it would not be sensible to change the Law to reflect the ICC’s Playing Condition.

Conclusion – in cricket which is not played under ICC Playing Conditions, such a Run out can only be effected before the landing of the bowler’s back foot. Once the bowler’s back foot has landed in the delivery stride, the non-striker is ‘safe’ to leave his ground.