

## **PLAYING CONDITIONS – VITALITY BLAST MEN'S COMPETITION**



**England and Wales Cricket Board, Lord's Cricket Ground  
St John's Wood, London, NW8 8QZ  
England**

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## **Application**

The Laws of Cricket 2017 Code (3rd Edition - 2022), as amended by these Playing Conditions, apply to the Vitality Blast Men's Competition from the Effective Date.

**Effective Date** means 1 April 2026.

## **Note on Overriding Safety Concerns**

If at any time the Designated Safety Officer at a venue that is hosting a game to which these Playing Conditions apply determines that there is or may be a safety risk to any person at the venue, they should inform the umpires and other match officials at the earliest possible opportunity. The Designated Safety Officer may take such action and implement such measures as they determine necessary to address that risk, consulting with the Head Grounds Manager and the umpires (and any other personnel they consider necessary) as appropriate to the nature of the risk identified.

Any requirements within these Playing Conditions may be overridden solely to the extent necessary to address the identified safety risk, and any action or measures taken to achieve this that would otherwise be incompatible with any requirement in these Playing Conditions shall not be deemed a breach of the relevant Playing Condition(s). So far as is possible, all reasonable steps should be taken to implement any necessary actions or measures in a way that mitigates any non-compliance with these Playing Conditions.

If it is alleged that any team has failed to act in good faith when taking certain actions as permitted by this section that would otherwise be in breach of any Playing Condition, or has failed to take adequate preparatory steps or provide sufficient resources to minimise any reasonably foreseeable breach of these Playing Conditions that arises from any action taken to address a safety risk, the matter may be referred to the Cricket Regulator for further investigation.

For the purposes of these Playing Conditions, **Designated Safety Officer** means the person that is designated as the "Venue Safety Officer" on the venue's safety certificate, or, if that person is not present or at venues with no such certificate, the person with overall responsibility for health and safety matters at the venue.

## **1 LAW 1 – THE PLAYERS**

### **1.1 Law 1.1 (Number of players) shall be replaced by:**

A match is played between two sides, each of eleven players, one of whom shall be captain. A match shall however be able to commence if one or both sides nominate nine or ten players. A match shall not commence if either team is unable to nominate at least 9 players. After the match has commenced, should a team have fewer than 9 players able to play, the Competition Technical Committee shall have ultimate authority over the continuation of the match.

If, during the match and for whatever reason, a side is reduced to fewer than the original number of nominated players, the match shall continue as long as it is possible to do so under the Laws.

### **1.2 Law 1.2 (Nomination and replacement of players) shall be replaced by:**

Each captain shall nominate their players in writing to one of the umpires before the toss. No player may be replaced after the nomination of teams and before the umpire has called Play,

other than in the circumstances of Playing Condition 1.3 below, without the consent of the opposing captain (not to be unreasonably withheld) and ECB Domestic Cricket Operations. No player may be replaced after the umpire has called Play before the first ball of the match other than in the circumstances of 1.3 below.

If after a captain has nominated their players, it is discovered that someone who was not on the list has commenced their batting innings or commenced their run up to bowl, as though a nominated player, the offender shall take no further part in the match and no replacement, including the original nominated player shall be allowed. If the identity of the original nominated player is not self-evident, that player shall be identified by the Captain for approval by the Match Referee (or ECB Domestic Cricket Operations should no Match Referee be present).

### **1.3 Concussion replacements**

Concussion replacements shall be allowed in accordance with the ECB's Concussion Replacement Regulations.

## **2 LAW 2 – THE UMPIRES**

### **2.1 Law 2.1 (Appointment and attendance) shall be replaced by:**

Two umpires shall be appointed, one for each end to control the game as required by the Laws and Playing Conditions with absolute impartiality.

Umpires will be appointed by the ECB. They shall report themselves to the Ground Authority by 90 minutes prior to the start of the match.

### **2.2 Player Review and Umpire Review**

For matches which are televised and for which a third umpire is appointed, Umpire Review shall apply in Group Stage matches in accordance with the ECB's Decision Review System. In knockout matches, Umpire Review and Player Review shall apply in accordance with the ECB's Decision Review System.

### **2.3 Law 2.2 – Change of umpire - shall apply except that if there has to be a change of umpire, the duties of all umpires shall be determined by ECB.**

### **2.4 Law 2.7 – Fitness for play - shall apply with the addition that:**

The safety of all persons within the ground is of paramount importance to the ECB. In the event that any threatening circumstance to any person, whether actual or perceived, comes to the attention of any umpire (including for example weather, pitch invasions, act of God, etc), then the players, officials and any other person should immediately be asked to either leave the field of play in a safe and orderly manner and relocate to a safe and secure area, or to remain on the field of play or to not enter the field of play, in each case depending on the particular threat and as instructed by the Designated Safety Officer in accordance with the Note on Overriding Safety Concerns which appears at the top of this document.

### **2.5 Law 2.8 – Suspension of play in dangerous or unreasonable circumstances shall apply with the following additions:**

2.5.1 The umpires shall disregard any shadow on the pitch from the stadium or from any permanent object.

2.5.2 Following any inspection, the umpires will report their findings immediately to both captains and to the Ground Authority.

## **2.6 Floodlights**

2.6.1 In floodlit matches, the default is that floodlights will be turned on for the whole of the match. However, umpires shall delay switching on the floodlights if natural light is such that floodlights are not required. In the event of floodlight malfunction or if the floodlights cannot be used for safety reasons with resultant loss of time, then Vitality Blast Men's Competition Playing Conditions 12.4 and 12.5 shall apply as appropriate.

2.6.2 Use of floodlights does not preclude the application of Vitality Blast Men's Competition Playing Condition 2.5.

2.6.3 In non-floodlit matches where the home authority has confirmed prior to the commencement of the match that floodlights are available, if in the opinion of the umpires natural light has deteriorated to an unsuitable level, they may authorise the home authority to turn on the floodlights so that the match may continue in acceptable conditions.

2.7 Law 2.15 – Correctness of scores - shall apply. For the avoidance of doubt, a team innings score may only be corrected where necessary prior to the commencement of the subsequent team-innings of the match. See also Playing Conditions 3.2, 19.2 and Law 16.10.

## **2.8 Clothing and Equipment**

In all matches, players shall wear clothing and equipment in accordance with the ECB's Clothing and Equipment Regulations.

## **2.9 Sight Screens**

Sight Screens shall be black.

## **3 LAW 3 – THE SCORERS**

### **3.1 Law 3.1 – Appointment of scorers**

Law 3.1 – Appointment of scorers - shall apply except that three scorers shall be appointed, one of whom shall be a Data Scorer.

### **3.2 Law 3.2 – Correctness of scores**

Law 3.2 – Correctness of scores - shall apply. For the avoidance of doubt, a team innings score may only be corrected where necessary prior to the commencement of the subsequent team-innings of the match. See also Playing Condition 2.77 and Law 16.10.

## **4 LAW 4 – THE BALL**

### **4.1 Balls to be used**

White Kookaburra cricket balls conforming to the specifications laid down by the ECB, shall be used, and spare used balls for changing during a match shall also be of the same brand and specification. Spare balls must be of 2026 manufacture. All spare balls shall pass both ring tests of the ball gauge. Except as provided for in Law 4.5 and 41.2, the fielding captain, or their nominee, may select the ball with which they wish to bowl which shall be from the whole of the supply of new balls provided by the Ground Authority. Such selection must take place in the presence of the umpires, and the ball shall not be marked in any way.

4.2 Law 4.3 (New ball) shall not apply. One new ball shall be used for each innings.

4.3 Law 4.5 (Ball lost or becoming unfit for play) shall apply with the addition that:

4.3.1 The umpires may deem a ball that has become wet and soggy or unusually soft to be unfit for play. The umpires alone will select the replacement ball from the supply of approved replacements and shall inform the batters at the wicket and the fielding captain.

Either bowler or batter may raise the matter with the umpires and the umpires' decision as to a replacement or otherwise shall be final.

4.3.2 The umpires may use a ball gauge to assist them in their decision as to whether a used ball should be changed because it is out of shape. They shall only do so should the ball visually appear to be out of shape. Additionally, the fielding captain only may request that the umpires check the shape of the ball a maximum of one occasion for each ball. If the ball does not pass both ring tests of the ball gauge, it shall be changed.

## **5 LAW 5– THE BAT**

Law 5 shall apply with the addition that only Type A bats shall be used.

## **6 LAW 6 – THE PITCH**

6.1 All maintenance issues should be carried out with the guiding principle that they should ensure that conditions are as similar as possible for both sides throughout the match.

6.2 Law 6.3 (Selection and preparation) shall apply with the following additions:

Captains, umpires and Head Grounds Managers should co-operate to ensure that, prior to the start of any day's play, no-one bounces a ball on the pitch or strikes it with a bat to assess its condition or for any other reason, or causes damage to the pitch in any other way.

Prior to the commencement of a day's play, one TV commentator and camera crew of the official licensed TV broadcaster/s (but not news crew) may be permitted to inspect the pitch and surrounds subject to the following:

6.2.1 a ball must not be bounced on the pitch;

- 6.2.2 a key or knife may only be inserted in the pitch in the area between the popping and bowling creases.

In the event of any dispute, the umpires in consultation with the Ground Authority will rule and their ruling will be final.

- 6.3 Law 6.5 – Non-turf pitches – will not apply. However, stitched hybrid pitch systems in which synthetic turf fibres (polyethylene or polypropylene, of beige and/or green colour) are inserted vertically into an entire soil pitch with established natural turf, shall be permitted. Fibre stitches should be at a mean square spacing of 18 to 22 mm parallel to the direction of play and over the whole pitch area as defined by Law 6.1.

#### **6.4 Pitch Regulations**

The ECB's Pitch Regulations shall apply as they refer to Vitality Blast Men's Competition.

### **7 LAW 7 – THE CREASES**

#### **7.1 Additional Crease Markings**

Law 7.3 (The popping crease) shall apply with the addition that in matches when a third umpire is present, the reference to "a minimum of 6 ft/1.83m" shall be replaced by "a minimum of 45 ft/13.72m" and when iHawk is present by "a minimum of 15 feet/4.57m".

As a guideline to the umpires for the calling of wides on the offside the crease markings detailed in Appendix A shall be marked at each end of the pitch.

### **8 LAW 8 – THE WICKETS**

- 8.1 Law 8.2 (Size of stumps) shall apply with the following addition:

For televised matches slightly larger cylindrical stump(s) to accommodate the stump camera may be used. When any larger stumps are used, the overall dimensions shall conform to Law 8.1.

### **9 LAW 9 – PREPARATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE PLAYING AREA**

- 9.1 All maintenance issues should be carried out with the guiding principle that they should ensure that conditions are as similar as possible for both sides throughout the match.

- 9.2 Law 9.1.3 (Choice of rollers) is replaced by:

One light roller must be available. Rollers heavier than 254kg are prohibited.

#### **9.3 Drying of Pitch and Ground**

- 9.3.1 Prior to tossing for choice of innings the artificial drying of the pitch and outfield shall be at the discretion of the Head Grounds Manager. Thereafter and throughout the match the drying of the outfield may be undertaken at any time by the Head Grounds Manager, but the drying of the pitch shall be carried out only on the instructions and under the supervision of the umpires. The umpires shall be empowered to have the pitch dried without reference to the captains at any time they are of the opinion that it is unfit for play.

- 9.3.2 The umpires may instruct the Head Grounds Manager to use any available equipment, including any roller (other than an absorbent roller), for the purpose of drying the pitch and making it fit for play.

An absorbent roller may be used to remove water from the covers including, where absolutely necessary, the cover on the match pitch.

- 9.3.3 Following the artificial drying of the pitch, the captain of the batting side shall not have the right to select the roller prior to the resumption of play, but the umpires may decide on the use of a roller if they think fit.

## **10 LAW 10 – COVERING THE PITCH**

- 10.1 All maintenance issues should be carried out with the guiding principle that they should ensure that conditions are as similar as possible for both sides throughout the match, and in line with each venue's applicable COVID guidelines for groundstaff.

- 10.2 Law 10.1 (Before the match) shall apply with the addition that:

10.2.1 The whole pitch shall be covered the night before the match and, if necessary, until the first ball is bowled; and whenever necessary and possible at any time prior to that during the preparation of the pitch. The areas detailed in Playing Condition 10.3.2(a) to 10.3.2(d) shall also normally be covered the night before the match.

10.2.2 The umpires shall establish prior to the toss which method of covering of the match pitch shall be used during the course of the match.

- 10.3 Law 10.2 (During the match) and Law 10.3 (Removal of covers) shall be replaced by:

10.3.1 The whole pitch shall be covered:

- (a) On each night of the match and, if necessary, throughout any rest days.
- (b) In the event of play being suspended on account of rain during the specified hours of play, and at the interval between innings on account of rain.
- (c) The covers shall be removed prior to the start of play provided it is not raining at the time, but they will be replaced if rain falls prior to the commencement of play. The time for the removal of covers shall be at the Groundsperson's discretion.
- (d) If flatsheet covers are to be used on pitches from 48 hours before the start through to the end of matches, a dry coir mat or equivalent must be placed under the sheet.

10.3.2 The following areas will be covered, in addition to the pitch as in 10.3.1 above, unless the umpires determine otherwise:

- (a) The bowler's 'run up' to a distance of at least 10yards, with a width of 4 yards.
- (b) At least 20 feet either side of the length of the pitch.
- (c) The whole square including all worn patches.

- (d) The outfield, as much as is practicable.

#### 10.3.3 Covering During Play

- (a) In order to make play possible, the umpires may decide to have particularly wet or muddy areas covered by mats or blankets whilst play is in progress.
- (b) Any pitch(es) being prepared for a future match may be protected by a porous mat in order to avoid unnecessary damage.

### 11 LAW 11 – INTERVALS

- 11.1 There will normally be two sessions of play of 1 hour 15 minutes each, separated by an interval of 15 minutes. Law 11.9 (Agreement to forgo intervals) shall not apply.
- 11.2 If the innings of the team batting first is completed prior to the scheduled time for the Interval, the interval shall take place immediately and the innings of the team batting second will commence correspondingly earlier. In circumstances where the side bowling first has not completed the allotted number of overs by the scheduled or re-scheduled cessation time for the first innings, the umpires shall reduce the length of the interval by the amount of time that the first innings over-ran. The minimum time for the interval will be 10 minutes.
- 11.3 On any occasion where the innings of the side batting first is delayed or interrupted, the umpires will reduce the length of the interval to 10 minutes.

#### 11.4 Intervals for Drinks

No drinks intervals are permitted. An individual player may be given a drink either on the boundary edge or at the fall of a wicket, on the field, provided that no playing time is wasted. No other drinks shall be taken on to the field of play without the permission of the umpires. Any person taking drinks onto the field shall be dressed in proper cricket attire and any applicable COVID Personal Protective Equipment.

### 12 LAW 12 – START OF PLAY; CESSATION OF PLAY

#### 12.1 Group League matches (no Reserve Day) and Quarter-Finals (one reserve day)

Start times shall be agreed with ECB.

Should the reserve day be required in Quarter-Finals, the hours of play shall be agreed between the two Counties and approved by the umpires and ECB.

#### 12.2 Finals Day

- 12.2.1 Both semi-finals and the final will be played on Finals Day.

The scheduled hours of play will be as follows:

##### First Semi-Final

First Session ..... 11.00am - 12.15pm

Interval ..... 12.15pm - 12.30pm

Second Session ..... 12.30pm - 1.45pm

**Second Semi-Final**

First Session..... 2.30pm - 3.45pm

Interval..... 3.45pm - 4.00pm

Second Session ..... 4.00pm - 5.15pm

**Final**

First Session ..... 6.45pm - 8.00pm

Interval..... 8.00pm - 8.15pm

Second Session ..... 8.15pm - 9.30pm

12.2.2 A Technical Committee will, in conjunction with the umpires, determine the re-arrangement of overs and timings of matches in the case of any match being delayed or interrupted. At all times, the objectives of the Technical Committee will be prioritized as follows:

- (a) To ensure that both Semi-Finals and the Final are completed on the scheduled day of the matches (minimum overs to constitute a match is 5 overs per team).
- (b) To ensure wherever possible a 20-over per side floodlit Final.
- (c) To ensure that wherever possible both semi-finals are of the same duration.
- (d) To ensure that wherever possible, within each match, teams have the opportunity of batting for the same number of overs.
- (e) To balance the desire to achieve commercial objectives with the need to ensure matches of as long a duration as possible.

In making its judgments, the Technical Committee will need to take into account the amount of play that may already have taken place, the amount of play remaining, and the most accurate weather forecast.

If there is a delayed start or one or more interruptions in play, the Technical Committee may order up to 30 minutes of extra time either at the break between the first and second semi-final and/or between the second semi-final and the final and/or at the end of the first day (latest re-scheduled finish tbc) and readjust the timings for matches as appropriate. If the Technical Committee is satisfied that the Final cannot be completed on the first day, the timing for cessation of play on the first day will be 9.30pm.

The available hours of play on the Reserve Day are 10.00am – 8.00pm. The availability of floodlights on the Reserve Day will be confirmed at the time.

**12.3 Length of Innings – In uninterrupted matches (ie. matches which are neither delayed nor interrupted):**

- 12.3.1 Each team shall bat for 20 overs unless all out earlier.
- 12.3.2 If the team fielding first fails to bowl the required number of overs by the scheduled time for the cessation of the first innings, play shall continue until the required number of overs has been bowled and Playing Condition 12.6 shall apply.
- 12.3.3 If the team batting first is dismissed in less than 20 overs, the team batting second shall be entitled to bat for 20 overs.
- 12.3.4 If the team fielding second fails to bowl 20 overs by the scheduled time for the cessation of the second innings, the hours of play for the match shall, subject to conditions of ground, weather and light, be extended until the required number of overs has been bowled or a result has been achieved and Playing Condition 12.6 shall apply.

**12.4 Delayed or interrupted matches – Group Stage and Quarter-Final Matches.**

- 12.4.1 Any revision of the number of overs that may be necessary due to a delayed start or one or more interruptions in play as a result of adverse ground, weather or light conditions or any other reason, shall take no account of the potential existence of the reserve day. To constitute a match, a minimum of 5 overs has to be bowled to the side batting second, unless a result has been achieved earlier. Where a reserve day exists, if it is not possible to constitute the match on the first scheduled day then it shall be continued on the reserve day. For the avoidance of doubt any previously effected reduction in the length of the innings in progress (and any applicable Duckworth Lewis Stern target) will still apply at the start of the reserve day.

- 12.4.2 Delay or interruptions to the innings of the team batting first.

- (a) When playing time has been lost (see above) the revised number of overs to be bowled in the match shall be based on a rate of 3.75 mins per over in the total time available for play (that is, time already played added to time remaining though not including the time allocated to the interval).

Should calculations regarding numbers of overs result in a fraction of an over, the fraction shall be ignored.

In the event of a suspension occurring in the middle of an over, the number of total overs to be bowled in the match will be calculated as if the over in progress at the time of the interruption had been completed (note however 12.4.2(b) below).

The innings of the team batting first will continue from the point of the interruption.

The revision of the number of overs should ensure, whenever possible, that both teams have the opportunity to bat for the same number of overs. (Where this is possible, if the total number of overs in the match thereby

calculated results in an odd number of total overs in the match, then one over shall be added and the new total divided in half).

- (b) The team batting second shall not bat for a greater number of overs than the first team unless the latter completed its innings in less than its allocated overs.

To constitute a match, a minimum of 5 overs has to be bowled to the side batting second, unless a result has been achieved earlier.

A fixed time will be specified for the commencement of the interval, and also the close of play for the match, by applying a rate of 3.75 mins per over in respect of each over already bowled and/or scheduled to be bowled in each innings, rounding up any part minutes to the next full minute. All relative delays, interruptions in play, and the duration of the interval will be taken into account.

If this calculation produces a close of play time that is earlier than the original time for cessation of play on the final scheduled day for play (time for cessation of play shall take into account extra time), then one additional over should be allocated to each team, with the interval and close of play times being recalculated accordingly.

If there is more than one interruption to the innings of the side batting first, the above calculations should always be based on the original scheduled close of play, rather than the rescheduled close resulting from the previous interruption.

- (c) If the team fielding first fails to bowl the revised number of overs by the specified time, play shall continue subject to conditions of ground, weather and light until the required number of overs has been bowled or the innings is completed, and Playing Condition 12.6 shall apply. In all reduced overs matches both teams will be given one over's leeway in addition to anytime that the umpires might allow for stoppages. Allowances prior to a stoppage are carried forward for the purposes of the application of Playing Condition 12.6 only – they do not influence the recalculated number of overs or the scheduled close of either innings.

#### 12.4.3 Delay or interruptions to the innings of the team batting second.

- (a) When playing time has been lost (see above) and, as a result, it is not possible for the team batting second to have the opportunity of receiving its allocated, or revised allocation of overs in the playing time available, the number of overs shall be reduced at a rate of 3.75 mins per over in respect of the aggregated lost playing time. However, should the innings of the team batting first have been completed prior to the scheduled, or re-scheduled time for the commencement of the interval, then any calculation relating to the revision of overs shall not be effective until an amount of time equivalent to that by which the second innings started early has elapsed.

Should the calculations result in a fraction of an over the fraction shall be ignored. In the event of a suspension occurring in the middle of an over, the number of total overs lost will be calculated as above and the innings of the

team batting second will continue from the point of the interruption. (Note Playing Condition 12.4.3(b) below)

- (b) A rescheduled time for the close of play will be fixed by applying a rate of 3.75 minutes per over in respect of each over already bowled and/or re-scheduled to be bowled in the innings, rounding up any part minutes to the next full minute. (The timing and duration of all relative delays and interruptions in play with respect to the second innings will be taken into account in specifying this time.) This calculation should not cause the match to finish earlier than the time that was set for the cessation of play at the commencement of the second innings.

To constitute a match, a minimum of 5 overs have to be bowled to the team batting second unless a result has been achieved earlier.

The team batting second shall not bat for a greater number of overs than the first team unless the latter completed its innings in less than its allocated overs.

If, at the time at which play is able to resume, the number of overs required to be bowled in the second innings have already been bowled, then there shall be no further play and the result shall be determined by the Duckworth Lewis Stern method.

- (c) If the team fielding second fails to bowl the revised overs by the scheduled or re-scheduled close of play, the hours of play shall be extended subject to conditions of ground, weather and light until the overs have been bowled or a result achieved, and Playing Condition 12.6 shall apply. In all reduced overs matches the fielding team will be given one over's leeway in addition to any time that the umpires might allow for stoppages. Allowances prior to a stoppage are carried forward for the purposes of the application of Playing Condition 12.6 only – they do not influence the recalculated number of overs or the scheduled close of play.

**Note** The Home Authority will provide a Duckworth Lewis Stern Match Manager. The Duckworth Lewis Stern Match Manager must understand the Duckworth Lewis Stern method and is responsible for the Duckworth Lewis Stern calculations required. The umpires will both satisfy themselves as to the correctness of all such calculations before allowing play to take place. The Duckworth Lewis Stern Match Manager will notify the captains, scorers and all others concerned of such decisions.

## **12.5 Delayed or Interrupted Matches – Finals Day**

- 12.5.1 Any rearrangement of the number of overs that maybe necessary due to a delayed start or one or more interruptions in play as a result of adverse ground, weather or light conditions or any other reason, shall be made by the Technical Committee in accordance with Playing Condition 12.2.2 above.

The Technical Committee will apply the provisions of Playing Conditions 12.4.2 and 12.4.3 as appropriate, and in accordance with Playing Condition 12.2.2 above.

12.5.2 After any hold up in play, the Technical Committee will perform the Duckworth Lewis Stern calculations required. The umpires will both satisfy themselves as to the correctness of all such calculations before allowing play to take place. The Technical Committee shall notify the captains, scorers and all others concerned of such decisions.

## **12.6 Over-Rate Penalties**

All sides are expected to be in position to bowl the first ball of the last of their 20 overs within 1 hr 15 minutes playing time. In the event of them failing to do so, one fewer fielder shall be permitted outside the fielding restriction area in Playing Condition 28.2 than would normally be the case in the over in progress at the time. All penalties in this regard will be imposed immediately if the ball is dead, or if not, immediately the ball first becomes dead after the scheduled or re-scheduled cessation time for the innings.

The full quota of overs will be completed.

If the innings is terminated before the scheduled or re-scheduled cut-off time, no over-rate penalty shall apply. If the innings is interrupted, the over-rate penalty will apply based on the re-scheduled cessation time for that innings.

The umpire shall inform the fielding team captain when taking the field for the first time and on every subsequent occasion if play is interrupted by the weather, the scheduled cessation time for that innings. The umpire at the bowler's end will inform the fielding captain, the batter and their fellow umpire of any time allowances as and when they arise. (This matter will not be subject to retrospective negotiation). In addition, in all reduced overs matches, the fielding team will be given one over's leeway. For the avoidance of doubt, one over's leeway means that the fielding side must be in position to bowl the first ball of the penultimate over by the scheduled or rescheduled cut off time.

Over-rate penalties apply only to innings of 10 overs or more duration unless a penalty has been applied before 10 overs have been bowled. In innings of less than 10 overs duration, umpires shall apply the penalty run Laws for time wasting especially strictly.

This is the only penalty for a slow over-rate.

## **12.7 Ringing of the Bell**

The bell will be rung five minutes before the start of play and before the termination of an interval, when the umpires shall go to the wickets.

## **12.8 Technical Committee**

A Technical Committee will be available remotely at all knockout matches which will have the authority to override the provisions of Playing Conditions 11 and 12, as it deems appropriate, in order to increase the chances of the match being played to a result. This will include taking into account a weather forecast for later in the match.

## **13 LAW 13 – INNINGS**

13.1 Law 13.1 (Number of innings) shall be replaced by the following:

The match will consist of one innings per side, each innings being limited to a maximum of 20 overs.

One reserve day will be allocated for each quarter-final and Finals Day in case of weather interference. There will be no reserve day for Group matches.

### **13.2 Extra time**

Provision has been made for extra official playing time to make up for playing time lost. The length of extra time in each match (normally either 30 or 60 minutes) will be confirmed prior to the commencement of the group matches and similarly for the quarter-finals (including reserve days).

### **13.3 Number of Overs Per Bowler**

13.3.1 No bowler shall bowl more than 4 overs in an innings.

13.3.2 In a delayed or interrupted match where the overs are reduced for both teams or for the team bowling second;

(a) for innings of rescheduled length of at least 10 overs, no bowler may bowl more than one-fifth of the total overs allowed (unless such a number has been exceeded before the interruption). Where the total overs is not divisible by 5, one additional over shall be allowed to the maximum number per bowler necessary to make up the balance.

(b) for innings of rescheduled length of between 5 and 9 overs, no bowler may bowl more than two overs.

(c) When an interruption occurs mid-over and on resumption the bowler has exceeded the new maximum allocation, he will be allowed to finish the incomplete over.

13.3.3 In the event of a bowler breaking down and being unable to complete an over, the remaining balls will be allowed by another bowler. Such part of an over will count as a full over only in so far as each bowler's limit is concerned.

13.3.4 The scoreboard shall show the total number of overs bowled and the number of overs bowled by each bowler.

### **13.4 Fast Bowling**

Any regulations or guidelines on fast bowling notified by the ECB from time to time shall apply. It shall be the responsibility of the captain of any player to whom the fast bowling regulations or guidelines apply to inform the umpires of such and to apply the regulations or guidelines.

Any deviation from the fast bowling regulations or guidelines (as applicable) shall have no implications on the course of the match or competition in question.

## **14 LAW 14 – THE FOLLOW-ON**

Law 14 shall not apply.

**15 LAW 15 – DECLARATION AND FORFEITURE**

The captain of the batting side may not declare his innings closed at any time during the course of a match.

**16 LAW 16 – THE RESULT**

16.1 Laws 16.1, 16.4 and 16.5.2 shall not apply.

16.2 When a match is completed without applying the Duckworth Lewis Stern method, the team scoring the higher number of runs shall be the winner. If the scores are equal the match is tied.

16.3 If, due to suspension of play after the start of the match, the number of overs in the innings of either team has to be revised to a lesser number than that originally allotted (minimum 5 overs), then a revised target score should be set for the number of overs which the team batting second will have the opportunity of facing, this revised target being calculated by the Duckworth Lewis Stern method. A par score will be set for the second innings. If the par score is equalled the match is tied.

16.4 If a match is abandoned before it has been played to a conclusion and before the team batting second has received its allotted number of overs (providing that it has received not less than 5 overs), the result shall be decided by the Duckworth Lewis Stern method. If on abandonment the score of the team batting second is equal to the par score, the match is tied.

16.5 If after the restart of play it is discovered that the wrong Duckworth Lewis Stern target has been set the faulty target shall stand.

16.6 In the event of a match being tied:

16.6.1 In a Group Stage match, each team will be awarded two points

16.6.2 In a quarter-final, semi-final or final, the teams will compete in a Super Over to determine a winner

16.7 Subject to weather conditions the Super Over will take place at a time to be determined by the umpires. In normal circumstances it shall commence 10 minutes after the conclusion of the match. A Super Over involves each team, facing an over of 6 balls (unless ended earlier as provided for in 16.7.11) and the winner shall be the team scoring the greater number of runs, irrespective of the number of wickets lost.

16.7.1 The Super Over will take place on the pitch allocated for the match (the designated pitch) unless otherwise determined by the umpires in consultation with the ground authority. Before the start of the Super Over and between innings in the Super Over, debris shall be cleared from the pitch as per Law 9.2 and the creases shall be remarked as per Law 9.5. The pitch shall not be rolled at these times.

16.7.2 The umpires shall stand at the same end as that in which they finished the match.

16.7.3 In both innings of the Super Over, the fielding side shall choose from which end to bowl.

16.7.4 Only nominated players for the main match excluding any player that has been replaced, and including any replacement players may participate in the Super Over.

Should any player (including the batters and bowler) be unable to continue to participate in the Super Over due to injury, illness or other wholly acceptable reason, the relevant Laws and Playing Conditions as they apply in the main match shall also apply in the Super Over.

- 16.7.5 Any unserved Penalty time at the end of the main match shall be carried forward to the Super Over in accordance with Law 24.2.7. With the exception of Law 41.8 (Bowling of deliberate front-foot No ball) where the bowler shall not be allowed to bowl in any Super Over, the relevant Law shall apply in respect of any warnings and suspensions from the main match, or a previous Super Over, being carried forward to any subsequent Super Over. To avoid doubt, where a warning or suspension expires at the end of an innings, it shall not be carried forward to the Super Over.
- 16.7.6 Each team's over is played with the same fielding restrictions as apply for a non-powerplay over in a normal Vitality Blast Men's Competition match.
- 16.7.7 The interval between the two overs in the Super Over shall be 10 minutes unless the umpires and both teams are ready to commence the second innings within 10 minutes.
- 16.7.8 The team batting second in the match will bat first in the Super Over.
- 16.7.9 The captain of the fielding team (or their nominee) shall select the ball with which the fielding team shall bowl its over in the Super Over from the box of spare balls provided by the umpires (which shall include the balls used in the match, but no new balls). The team fielding second shall then immediately choose the ball that it shall bowl with in the Super Over. It may choose to use the same ball as chosen by the team bowling first or choose another ball from the same box. If the ball needs to be changed, the relevant Playing Conditions as they apply in the match shall also apply in the Super Over.
- 16.7.10 Replacing Law 25.2, the innings of all batters in the Super Over shall be considered to have commenced when that batter first steps onto the field of play.
- 16.7.11 The loss of two wickets in the over ends the team's one over innings.
- 16.7.12 In the event of the teams having the same score after the Super Over has been completed, a count-back from the final ball of the Super Over shall be conducted. The team with the higher scoring delivery shall be the winner. If a team loses two wickets during its over, then any unbowled deliveries will be counted as dot balls. Note that for this purpose, the runs scored from a delivery is defined as the total team runs scored since the completion of the previous legitimate ball, i.e including any runs resulting from wides, no ball or penalty runs.

Example:

Runs scored from	Team 1	Team 2
Ball 6	1	1
Ball 5	4	4

Ball 4	2	1
Ball 3	6	2
Ball 2	0	1
Ball 1	2	6

- 16.7.13 In this example both teams scored an equal number of runs from the 6th and 5th ball of their innings. However team 1 scored 2 runs from its 4th ball while team 2 scored a single so team 1 is the winner. If still equal, then another Super Over shall be played in accordance with 16.7. The team batting second in the first Super Over shall bat first in the second Super Over.
- 16.7.14 Should the Super Over be delayed or interrupted, the time at which play shall be abandoned shall be the later of (a) 20 minutes after the latest time for the scheduled or rescheduled cessation of play for the main match, taking into account any extra time allocated or (b) 20 minutes after the conclusion of the main match.
- 16.8 Should the Super Over not be completed due to Vitality Blast Men's Competition Playing Condition 2.5 being invoked, then the captains may, if circumstances (outdoors or indoors) permit, agree (in case of disagreement the umpires shall decide) to the following form of 'bowl-out' contest to achieve a result:

Five players from each side will bowl over-arm two deliveries each at a wicket (conforming to Law 8) from a wicket (conforming to Law 8) pitched at a distance of 22 yards with, if practicable, bowling, popping and return creases (conforming to Law 7). The first bowler from Team A will bowl two deliveries, then the first bowler from Team B will bowl two deliveries, then the second bowler from Team A will bowl two deliveries, and so on. The side which bowls down the wicket (as defined in Law 29.1) most times shall be the winner. If the scores are equal, the same players will bowl one ball each alternately to achieve a result on a 'sudden death' basis (the order in which the bowlers bowl in the sudden death may differ from the first stage of the bowl out).

The following shall also apply in respect of 'bowl-outs':

- 16.8.1 The same suitably acceptable ball (not a new one) will be used by both teams. If this ball becomes wet, it may be changed subject to the umpires' approval.
- 16.8.2 If a bowler bowls a 'no ball' it will count as one of their two deliveries but will not count towards the score of the team.
- 16.8.3 If the original match has started, the five cricketers to take part in the 'bowl-out' must be selected from the nominated players for the match excluding any player that has been replaced, and including any replacement players. If there has been no play in the original match (the toss has not taken place), the five cricketers may be selected from any of a County's registered cricketers.
- 16.8.4 Each side will appoint a wicket-keeper to stand behind the wicket but out of reach of the stumps.

16.9 Should neither a Super Over nor a bowl out be possible, in a quarter-final or semi-final, the result shall be determined by the toss of a coin; in the final the trophy shall be shared.

16.10 In a Group Stage match, if it is not possible for both teams to receive the minimum of 5 overs necessary to constitute a match, the match shall be declared No Result and each team shall be awarded 2 points.

In a quarter-final or semi-final, if it is not possible for both teams to receive the minimum of 5 overs necessary to constitute a match, the match shall be decided by a bowl out as described in 16.8. If a bowl out is not possible in a quarter-final or semi-final, the result shall be determined by the toss of a coin.

In the final, if it is not possible for both teams to receive the minimum of 5 overs necessary to constitute a match then the trophy shall be shared.

16.11 In the event of a Group Stage match being abandoned due to a pitch that has been rated unfit, or if the pitch is rated poor or below average, in accordance with the ECB's Pitch Regulations, the home team shall be awarded 0 points and a Loss for tiebreaker purposes. This shall apply regardless of the score when the match was abandoned in the case of an unfit pitch.

In the case of an unfit pitch, the visiting team shall be awarded 2 points if the match was not constituted, 0 points if it had lost a constituted match, 4 points if it had won a constituted match and a No Result, Loss or Win respectively for tiebreaker purposes. In respect of net-run-rate for the home team, they shall be considered only to have scored 0 runs but to have faced the scheduled number of overs when the first innings commenced. Net run-rate shall apply in the usual way for the visiting team.

In the case of a pitch rated poor or below average, the visiting team shall be awarded the points it gained in the match, regardless of the result of the match. In respect of net-run-rate for the home team, they shall be considered only to have scored 0 runs but to have faced the scheduled number of overs when the first innings commenced. Net run-rate shall apply in the usual way for the visiting team.

In the event of a quarter-final match being abandoned due to a pitch that has been rated unfit in accordance with the ECB's Pitch Regulations, then the visiting team shall be declared the winners regardless of the score when the match was abandoned.

Note that this does not preclude the matter being referred to the Cricket Regulator.

#### **16.12 Points System in Vitality Blast Men's Competition Group Stage**

16.12.1 Each team will play: the other 5 teams in its group home and away, one team from another group at home and one team from the remaining group away. Four points will be awarded for a Win, two points for a Tie or No Result and no points for a Loss.

16.12.2 The three Groups are as detailed in the Professional County Cricket Competition Regulations.

16.12.3 The tie-breakers for teams finishing on equal points within a group will be:

- (a) The team with the higher net run rate in the Group Matches will be placed in the higher position (see below).

- (b) The team that has scored most points in matches between teams finishing on equal points (note that if this only separates one team when more than two teams are considered by this tiebreaker, only the remaining teams move to the next tiebreaker).
- (c) Wicket-taking strike rate (number of balls bowled per wicket taken)
- (d) In the event that teams cannot be separated by **Error! Reference source not found.** to **Error! Reference source not found.** above, this will be done by drawing lots.

16.12.4 The winners of each group and the best second-placed team will qualify for home draws in the quarter-finals. The other two second-placed teams and the two best third-placed teams will qualify for away draws in the quarter-finals.

Seeds 1, 2 and 3 will be the three group winners (ref 16.12.5)

Seed 4, 5 and 6 will be the three second-placed teams (ref 16.12.5)

Seeds 7 and 8 will be the two best third-placed teams (ref 16.12.5)

Quarter-final ties will be Seed 1 v Seed 8, Seed 2 v Seed 7, Seed 3 v Seed 6, Seed 4 v Seed 5

16.12.5 The mechanism for determining quarter-final seedings will be:

- (a) The team with the higher number of points will be placed in the higher position
- (b) In the event that teams cannot be separated by 16.12.5(a), the team with the higher net run rate in the Group Matches will be placed in the higher position (see below).
- (c) In the event that teams cannot be separated by 16.12.5(a) and 16.12.5(b), the team with the best wicket-taking strike rate (number of balls bowled per wicket taken) will be placed in the higher position.
- (d) In the event that teams cannot be separated by **Error! Reference source not found.** to **Error! Reference source not found.** above, this will be done by drawing lots.

#### 16.12.6 Net Run Rate

A team's net run rate is calculated by deducting from the average runs per over scored by that team, the average runs per over scored against that team.

In the event of a team being all out in less than its full quota of overs, the calculation of the net run rate of both teams shall be based on the full quota of overs to which the batting team would have been entitled and not on the number of overs in which the team was dismissed.

Only those matches where results are achieved will count for the purpose of net run rate calculations. Where a match is abandoned, but a result is achieved under Duckworth Lewis Stern, for net run rate purposes Team 1 will be accredited with Team 2's Par Score on abandonment off the same number of overs faced by Team 2. Where a match is concluded but with Duckworth Lewis Stern having been applied at an earlier point in the match, Team 1 will be accredited with 1 run less than the final Target Score for Team 2 off the total number of overs allocated to Team 2 to reach the target.

**16.12.7 County unable to field a team**

This clause relates solely to circumstances where a County is not able to field a team and is distinct from Law 16.3 (Umpires awarding a match) and Playing Condition 2.4 (Fitness for play).

If a County is not able to field a team for (or during) a match or the Competition Technical Committee decides in accordance with Professional County Cricket Competition Regulation 10 that the match shall not continue due to the reduced availability of the County's players:

- (a) the match shall be cancelled or abandoned, as appropriate;
- (b) if a Group Stage match, the County which is unable to field a team shall be awarded 0 points even if the match had been constituted and the County would have won the match. If a knockout match, the County which is unable to field a team shall lose the match, even if the match had been constituted and the County would have won the match.
- (c) if a Group Stage match the other County shall be awarded 2 points if the match was not constituted, 0 points if it had lost a constituted match, 4 points if it had won a constituted match. If a knockout match, unless alternative and most merited opposition is arranged by ECB, the other County shall win the match even if the match had been constituted and the other County would have lost the match.
- (d) In the Group Stage, the County which is unable to field a team shall be awarded a loss and the other County a Win, Loss or No Result for tiebreaker purposes in accordance with (c) above. In respect of net-run-rate, the County unable to field a team shall be considered only to have scored 0 runs but to have faced the scheduled number of overs when the first innings commenced. Net-run-rate shall apply in the usual way for the other team.

16.12.8 The application of 16.12.77 does not preclude the County which is unable to field a team being referred to the Cricket Regulator.

16.12.9 Any County awarded 0 points in accordance with 16.12.7(b) shall have the ability to challenge the application of this penalty on the basis that they acted in such a way to fulfil the fixture that any penalty in the circumstances would be manifestly unfair. The burden of proof shall be on the County. The County must issue the challenge to the Chair of the Cricket Discipline Panel in writing, copied to the Cricket Regulator, together with all supporting evidence, within 24 hours of the ECB confirming in writing that it has been awarded 0 points in accordance with 16.12.7(b). The Chair of the Cricket Discipline Panel will appoint a Disciplinary

Tribunal Chair and two other members of the Cricket Discipline Panel to form a Disciplinary Tribunal. The Disciplinary Tribunal shall determine its own procedure and seek additional information where it considers necessary, including allowing the Cricket Regulator the opportunity to respond to the challenge. The Disciplinary Tribunal shall, wherever possible, consider the case within 48 hours of the match being cancelled or abandoned. If the Disciplinary Tribunal considers that the application of the penalty would be manifestly unfair, the County shall be awarded 2 points if the match was not constituted, 0 points if it had lost a constituted match, 4 points if it had won a constituted match, and credited with a Win, Loss or No Result for tiebreaker purposes accordingly. The decision of the Disciplinary Tribunal shall be final. No challenge shall be allowed with respect to knockout matches.

16.12.10 Refusal to play by both teams

Should both teams refuse to play in circumstances where the umpires have determined that play should commence or re-commence:

- a) In a Group Stage match, the match shall be deemed a No Result and in respect of net run-rate, the teams shall be considered only to have scored 0 runs but to have faced 20 overs. For tiebreaker purposes, each team shall be awarded a Loss.
- b) In a quarter-final or semi-final, neither team shall progress to the next stage of the competition. The team that would have been the opponent in the next stage of the competition shall automatically be deemed to have won that match.
- c) In the Final, both teams shall be disqualified from the competition. Consideration shall be given to the losing semi-finalists competing in a rearranged Final. If not possible then the trophy shall be shared by the losing semi-finalists.

Note that this does not preclude the matter being referred to the Cricket Regulator.

16.13 With reference to Playing Condition 16.12.3 above, the semi-finals shall be:

Winner of Seed 1 v Seed 8 versus Winner of Seed 4 v Seed 5

Winner of Seed 2 v Seed 7 versus Winner of Seed 3 v Seed 6

**17 LAW 17 – THE OVER**

Law 17 shall apply.

**18 LAW 18 – SCORING RUNS**

Law 18 shall apply except that Laws 18.5.1 and 18.5.2 shall be replaced by:

- 18.1 If either umpire considers that one or both batters deliberately ran short at that umpire's end, the umpire concerned shall, when the ball is dead, call and signal Short run and inform the other umpire of what has occurred and apply 18.2.

A deliberate short run is an attempt by the batters to appear to run more than one run, while at least one batter deliberately does not make good their ground at one end.

Provided the umpires believe that there was no intention by the batter concerned to deceive the umpires, it will not be considered a deliberate short run if the batters abandon an attempted run.

18.2 The bowler's end umpire shall

- disallow all runs to the batting side
- signal No ball or Wide to the scorers, if applicable
- repeat the Short run signal to the scorers
- award 5 Penalty runs to the fielding side
- award any other 5-run Penalty that is applicable except for Penalty runs under Law 28.3 (Protective helmets belonging to the fielding side)
- inform the captain of the fielding side and, as soon as practicable, the captain of the batting side of the reason for this action.
- Instruct the fielding captain to decide which of the batters at the wicket, including the incoming batter if applicable, shall face the next delivery.

## 19 LAW 19 – BOUNDARIES

19.1 Law 19.1 (Determining the boundary and the field of play) shall apply with the following additions:

19.1.1 The Ground Authority shall aim to provide the largest playing area, subject to no boundary exceeding a distance of 90 yards from the centre of the pitch.

In any event, the distance from one square boundary to the other square boundary shall not be less than 120 yards and neither square boundary shall be shorter than 50 yards. The straight boundary at both ends of the pitch shall be a minimum of 60 yards. Distances shall be measured from the centre of the pitch to be used.

A gap of 3 yards between the boundary and any perimeter fencing (or other solid object) is mandatory. If this results in a boundary shorter than the minimum being required, then ECB Domestic Cricket Operations must be contacted for approval for such a boundary to be used.

In the event of the umpires, during their pre-match inspection, considering that a suitably large area has not been utilised for the marking of boundaries within this Playing Condition, they shall be empowered to have them moved to achieve this objective, subject to consultation with the Ground Authority.

On grounds where the boundary is not clearly defined by a perimeter fence or edge of grass area, it must be marked by a rope.

19.1.2 In addition to Law 19.1.2, if practicable, sight screens shall be provided at both ends of all grounds. Advertising shall be permitted on the sight screen behind the striker, provided that it is removed for the subsequent over from that end.

19.2 Law 19.7 (Runs scored from boundaries) shall apply and in addition, at the point that the ball ceases to be dead subsequent to a boundary being scored or Time has been called, there shall be no scope for review or further review of the number of runs scored from that boundary.

19.3 Law 19.5 (Fielder grounded beyond the boundary) shall apply except that Law 19.5.2 shall be replaced by:

19.3.1 A fielder who is not in contact with the ground is considered to be grounded beyond the boundary if, prior to their first contact with the ball, their final contact with the ground was not entirely within the boundary. This applies to any fielder who makes contact with the ball after it has been delivered by the bowler, whether or not the ball has previously been touched by another fielder.

19.3.1.1 If a fielder's first contact with the ball does not contravene 19.3.1, that fielder may then jump from outside the boundary in order to make contact with the ball whilst airborne. After making contact with the ball once airborne, all subsequent contact with the ground by that fielder, until the ball becomes dead, must be within the field of play. Any subsequent contact with the ground outside the boundary by that fielder during that delivery, whether or not in contact with the ball, will result in a boundary being scored.

19.3.1.2 If the ball is returned to the field of play, whether to another fielder or onto the ground, by a fielder who has jumped from outside the boundary, that fielder must land, and remain, within the boundary until the ball becomes dead. Otherwise a boundary shall be scored.

## **20 LAW 20 – DEAD BALL**

Law 20 shall apply with the addition of the following to Law 20.4 (Umpire calling and signalling Dead Ball).

In a match where cameras are being used on or over the field of play (e.g. Spydercam), should a ball that has been hit by the batter make contact, while still in play, with the camera, its apparatus or its cable, either umpire shall call and signal Dead ball. The ball shall not count as one of the over and no runs shall be scored. If the delivery was called a No ball it shall count and the No ball penalty applied. No other runs (including penalty runs) apart from the No ball penalty shall be scored. Should a ball thrown by a fielder make contact with a camera on or over the field of play, its apparatus or its cable, either umpire shall call and signal dead ball. Unless this was already a no-ball or wide, the ball shall count as one of the over. All runs scored to that point shall count, plus the run in progress if the batters have already crossed.

## **21 LAW 21 – NO BALL**

Law 21 shall apply with the following additions:

21.1 Law 21.1 (Mode of Delivery) - there shall be no special agreement under Law 21.1.2 that a ball may be delivered underarm.

21.2 Law 21.2 (Fair Delivery – the Arm) and 21.3 (Ball thrown or delivered underarm – action by umpires) shall be read in conjunction with the ECB's Bowling Review Regulations. These regulations will be published in a separate document.

21.3 Law 21.15 (Penalty for a No ball) shall apply.

In the event of the striker's end umpire failing to call and signal No Ball when Law 28.4 (Limitation of onside fielders) has been breached, immediately the ball becomes dead the striker may draw the matter to that umpire's attention.

If the striker's end umpire is able to verify the breach he shall call and signal No Ball. If the striker's end umpire is unable to verify the breach then he shall confirm that the events of the delivery shall be unchanged.

21.4 Law 21.10 (Ball bouncing over head height of striker) shall not apply. (See Playing Condition 41.3.4).

21.5 Free Hit after a No Ball

In addition to Playing Condition 21.3 above, the delivery following a no ball shall be a free hit for whichever batter is facing it.

If the delivery for the free hit is not a legitimate delivery (any kind of no ball or a wide ball), then the next delivery will become a free hit for whichever batter is facing it.

For any free hit, the striker can be dismissed only under the circumstances that apply for a no ball even if the delivery for the free hit is called wide ball.

Field changes are not permitted for free hit deliveries unless there is a change of striker or the No Ball was the result of a field restriction breach in which case the field may be changed to the extent of correcting the breach. However, in all circumstances, any fielder within 15 yards of the striker may retreat to a position on the same line no more than 15 yards from the striker.

The umpires will signal a free hit by (after the normal No Ball signal) extending one arm straight upwards and moving it in a circular motion.

21.6 Law 21.7 (Ball bouncing more than once, rolling along the ground or pitching off the pitch)

Law 21.7 shall apply. The third umpire may be consulted and, if required, can review television replays to assist with the adjudication of No balls under this Law.

## **22 LAW 22 – WIDE BALL**

Law 22 shall apply with the following exceptions:

22.1 In addition to Law 22.1 (Judging a Wide), any delivery, not being a No ball and not touching the striker's bat or person, that passes outside of the return crease on either side of the striker's wicket shall be called Wide. Law 22.4.1 shall not apply in this circumstance.

22.2 Umpires are instructed to apply a very strict and consistent interpretation in regard to this Law in order to prevent negative bowling wide of the wicket.

**23 LAW 23 – BYE AND LEG BYE**

Law 23 shall apply.

**24 LAW 24 – FIELDER’S ABSENCE; SUBSTITUTES**

24.1 Law 24.1 (Substitute fielders) shall apply with the following additions:

24.1.1 The opposing captain shall have no right of objection to any player acting as a Substitute.

24.1.2 No Substitute may take the field until the player for whom they are to substitute has been absent from the field for a period of two consecutive complete overs, with the exception that if a fielder sustains an obvious serious injury or is obviously taken ill, a Substitute shall be allowed immediately. A Substitute shall be allowed immediately for all head or blood injuries. Substitutes shall be allowed at the sole discretion of the umpires.

24.1.3 Squad members of the fielding team who are not playing in the match and who are not acting as substitute fielders shall be required to wear a team training bib whilst on the playing area (including the area between the boundary and the perimeter fencing).

24.2 Law 24.2 (Fielder absent or leaving the field of play) shall apply except:

24.2.1 A player shall only accrue Penalty time if they are absent from the field for longer than 8 minutes. In such cases, the whole of the time that the player is absent from the field shall count as unserved Penalty time. A player’s unserved Penalty time shall be limited to a maximum of 40 minutes (refer Law 24.2.3)

**25 LAW 25 – BATTER’S INNINGS; RUNNERS**

Law 25 shall apply with the following amendment:

25.1 In Law 25.4 (Batter retiring), Law 25.4.3 shall be replaced by:

If a batter retires for any reason other than as in Law 25.4.2, the innings of that batter shall not resume and that batter is to be recorded immediately as Retired – Out. This playing condition shall also apply should a batter retire during an interval or interruption.

**26 LAW 26 – PRACTICE ON THE FIELD**

Law 26 shall apply with the following additions:

26.1 No practice shall be undertaken on a match pitch during its preparation period (typically the 10 days prior to the match).

26.2 There shall be no bowling or batting practice on any part of the square or the area parallel to the match pitch during the hours of play except between innings.

26.3 Practice facilities – Prior to the day’s play, all grounds are to provide a net for ‘throw-downs’ and either a dedicated grass net area or a net on the square. In addition, every effort should

be made to provide practice facilities at other times when teams have the opportunity to practise.

#### **26.4 Hitting Up**

Teams are required to observe Ground Authority Regulations and the ECB Range Hitting Directive and to exercise the utmost care and caution when engaging in practice and pre-match warm-up and 'hitting up' activities so as to avoid the risk of injury to members of the public, damage to the centre wicket region and to perimeter fencing.

#### **27 LAW 27 – THE WICKET-KEEPER**

Law 27 shall apply.

#### **28 LAW 28 – THE FIELDER**

Law 28 shall apply with the following additions:

- 28.1 At the instant of delivery there shall not be more than five fielders on the leg side.
- 28.2 For the first 6 overs (powerplay overs) only in a 20-overinnings, at the instant of delivery no more than two fielders are permitted to be outside an area bounded by two semi-circles centred on each middle stump (each with a radius of 30 yards) and joined by a parallel line on each side of the pitch (the fielding circle). Refer Appendix B.
- The fielding circle should be marked by painted white 'dots' at five-yard intervals, each 'dot' to be covered by a white plastic or rubber disc measuring seven inches in diameter.
- 28.3 In circumstances when the number of overs of the batting team is reduced, the powerplay overs in Playing Condition 28.2 shall be reduced in accordance with the table below. For the sake of clarity, it should be noted that the table shall apply to both the 1st and 2nd innings of the match.

<b>Total overs in innings</b>	<b>No. of powerplay overs, balls for which fielding restrictions in 28.2 shall apply</b>
5	1.3
6	1.5
7	2.1
8	2.2
9	2.4
10	3.0
11	3.2
12	3.4
13	3.5
14	4.1
15	4.3

16	4.5
17	5.1
18	5.2
19	5.4

- 28.4 For the remainder of each innings no more than five fielders are permitted to be outside the fielding circle at the instant of delivery.
- 28.5 If following an interruption, on resumption the total number of powerplay overs for the innings has already been exceeded, then there will be no further powerplay deliveries bowled in the innings.
- 28.6 In the event of an infringement of any of the above fielding restrictions, the striker's end umpire shall call and signal 'No Ball'.
- 28.7 In the event of the striker's end umpire failing to call and signal No Ball when the fielding restrictions in this Playing Condition have been breached or when Law 28.4 (Limitation of on side fielders) has been breached, immediately the ball becomes dead the striker may draw the matter to that umpire's attention. If the striker's end umpire is able to verify the breach they shall call and signal No Ball. If the striker's end umpire is unable to verify the breach then they shall confirm that the events of the delivery shall be unchanged.
- 28.8 In order to eliminate any waste of playing time caused by the removal from the field of fielders' protective equipment other than helmets (e.g. shin pads, etc.) such equipment, once taken on to the field, must be worn until the fall of a wicket or until the next interval.
- The exchanging of equipment between members of the fielding side on the field shall be permitted, subject to any applicable COVID protocols and provided that the umpires do not consider that it constitutes a waste of playing time.
- 28.9 Umpires are not to hold helmets.
- 28.10 The ECB's Head Protector Regulations shall apply. If the non-striker chooses not to wear their helmet, they must carry it personally all the time while play is in progress.
- 28.11 A batter may only change an item of protective equipment at the fall of a wicket or at the next interval, unless the equipment is clearly damaged or unserviceable and then only with the approval of the umpires.

## **29 LAW 29 – THE WICKET IS DOWN**

Law 29 shall apply.

## **30 LAW 30 – BATTER OUT OF HIS/HER GROUND**

Law 30 shall apply.

## **31 LAW 31 – APPEALS**

Law 31 shall apply with the following addition:

**31.1 Intimidatory Appealing**

In the event of an appeal, all members of the fielding team must maintain their fielding positions until a decision is given, unless legitimately in the act of fielding or backing up the ball which is not yet dead. For the purposes of this Playing Condition, a referral to the third umpire will constitute a decision.

**32 LAW 32 – BOWLED**

Law 32 shall apply.

**33 LAW 33 – CAUGHT**

Law 33 shall apply.

**34 LAW 34 – HIT THE BALL TWICE**

Law 34 shall apply.

**35 LAW 35 – HIT WICKET**

Law 35 shall apply.

**36 LAW 36 – LEG BEFORE WICKET**

Law 36 shall apply.

**37 LAW 37 – OBSTRUCTING THE FIELD**

Law 37 shall apply.

**38 LAW 38 – RUN OUT**

Law 38 shall apply.

**39 LAW 39 – STUMPED**

Law 39 shall apply.

**40 LAW 40 – TIMED OUT**

Law 40 shall apply except that the incoming batter must be in position to take guard or for their partner to be ready to receive the next ball within 60 seconds of the fall of the previous wicket or the retirement of a batter. The incoming batter is expected to be ready to make their way to the wicket immediately, and is expected to jog to the wicket. Umpires shall strictly apply Law 41.10 (Batter wasting time).

**41 LAW 41 – UNFAIR PLAY**

Law 41 shall apply with the following additions/amendments:

#### 41.1 Matches where a mutually convenient outcome is possible

Where a Match Referee (or if none, the umpires) is concerned that the match is being conducted in a manner that seeks to lead to a mutually convenient outcome, they will notify ECB Domestic Cricket Operations at the earliest opportunity, who in turn will refer the matter to the Cricket Regulator for further investigation in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure Regulations.

#### 41.2 Law 41.3 (The match ball – changing its condition) shall be replaced by:

41.2.1 The umpires shall make frequent and irregular inspections of the ball. In addition, they shall immediately inspect the ball if they suspect anyone of attempting to change the condition of the ball, except as permitted in Playing Condition 41.2.2.

41.2.2 It is an offence for any player to take any action which changes or which may be perceived as likely to change the condition of the ball.

Except in carrying out their normal duties, a batter is not allowed to wilfully damage the ball. See also Law 5.5 (Damage to the ball).

A fielder may, however

- (a) polish the ball on their clothing provided that no artificial substance is used, that the only natural substance used is sweat, and that such polishing wastes no time.
- (b) remove mud from the ball under the supervision of an umpire.
- (c) dry a wet ball on a piece of cloth that has been approved by the umpires.

41.2.3 The umpires shall consider the condition of the ball to have been unfairly changed if any action by any player does not comply with the conditions in Playing Condition 41.2.2 or if the umpires consider that the condition of the ball is inconsistent with the use it has received.

The umpires shall then ask the captain of the opposing side if they would like the ball to be replaced. If necessary, in the case of the batting side, the batters at the wicket may deputise for their captain.

- (a) If a replacement ball is requested, the umpires shall select and bring into use immediately, a ball which shall have wear comparable to that of the previous ball immediately prior to the contravention.
- (b) The umpires together shall decide whether they can identify the player(s) responsible for the unfair action.

41.2.4 Regardless of whether a replacement ball has been chosen to be used, if it is possible to identify the player(s) responsible, the bowler's end umpire shall:

- (a) Award 5 penalty runs to the opposing side.
- (b) If appropriate, inform the batters at the wicket and the captain of the fielding side that the ball has been changed and the reason for their action.

- (c) Inform the captain of the batting side as soon as practicable of what has occurred.
  - (d) Together with the other umpire report the incident to ECB Domestic Cricket Operations, who in turn will refer the matter to the Cricket Regulator.
- 41.2.5 Regardless of whether a replacement ball has been chosen to be used, if it is not possible to identify the player(s) responsible, the bowler's end umpire shall:
- (a) issue the captain with a first and final warning, and
  - (b) advise the captain that the incident will be reported to ECB Domestic Cricket Operations, who in turn will refer the matter to the Cricket Regulator, and that should there be any further incident by that team during the remainder of the match, steps 41.2.4(a) to (d) above will be adopted, with the captain deemed to be the player responsible.
- 41.3 Law 41.6 (Bowling of dangerous and unfair short pitched deliveries) shall apply with the following additions:
- 41.3.1 Regardless of how wide of the striker a delivery is, there shall be no more than one delivery per over that after pitching pass or would have passed over shoulder height of the striker standing upright at the popping crease.
- 41.3.2 The umpire shall make it clear to the bowler (and any bowler called upon to complete an over) and the batters at the wicket when a delivery within the limit in 41.3.1 has been bowled. It is unfair if the limit is exceeded and the umpire shall call and signal No ball on each such occasion and consider it as part of the warning sequence in Laws 41.6.3 and 41.6.4.
- 41.3.3 If a short pitched delivery either:
- (a) Passes or would have passed over head height of the striker standing upright at the popping crease; or
  - (b) Passes or would have passed between shoulder height and head height of the striker standing upright at the popping crease; or
  - (c) Passes between shoulder height and head height of the striker standing upright at the popping crease and wide of the striker so that in the umpire's opinion they are unable to hit it with their bat by means of a normal cricket stroke
- it shall, although not necessarily threatening physical injury, be deemed dangerous in accordance with Law 41.6.1, and considered as part of the warning sequence in Laws 41.6.3 and 41.6.4.
- 41.3.4 Law 21.10 shall not apply. A delivery as described in 41.3.3(a) , if not a No ball and not touching the striker's bat or person, shall be called and signalled Wide (refer Law 22).
- 41.3.5 A delivery as described in 41.3.3(c), if not a No ball, and not touching the striker's bat or person, shall be called and signalled Wide (refer Law 22).

41.3.6 Law 41.6.5 shall not apply. Any warnings applied in Law 41.6.3 shall be added to any warnings applied in Law 41.7 and action taken according to Law 41.6.4.

41.4 Law 41.7 (Bowling of dangerous and unfair non-pitching deliveries) shall apply with the following amendment:

41.4.1 Law 41.7.5 shall not apply. Any warnings applied in Law 41.7 shall be added to any warnings applied in Law 41.6.3 and action taken according to Law 41.7.4.

#### **41.5 Electronic Equipment**

With the exception of broadcaster to player communication and player movement technology, the use of electronic communication devices and equipment of any kind which enables communication between on-field players and anyone not on the field of play shall not be permitted during the scheduled or re-scheduled hours of play.

#### **42 LAW 42 – PLAYERS’ CONDUCT**

Law 42 shall apply with the following amendments:

42.1 In Laws 42.1.4, 42.2.2.2, 42.3.2.2, the batters at the wicket may deputise for their captain.

42.2 In Laws 42.1.4, 42.4.2.2, 42.5.2.2, a team representative may deputise for their captain.

42.3 The ECB’s Professional Conduct Regulations shall also apply as appropriate and as separately detailed.

