

Generic Rules

1 Management

1.1 These rules apply to the following ECB competitions:

- a. Tier 3 Competitions;
- b. National Club Championship;
- c. Indoor National Club Championship;
- d. Club T20;
- e. Women's Club T20;
- f. Girls U19 Club T20;
- g. U15 Club T20;
- h. Girls U15 Club T20;
- i. U13 Club T20;
- j. Girls U13 Club T20;
- k. U18 County Championship;
- l. U18 County Cup;
- m. U18 County T20;
- n. Girls U18 County Cup;
- o. Girls U18 County T20;
- p. U16 County Cup;
- q. Girls U16 County Cup;
- r. Girls U16 County T20;
- s. U14 County Cup;
- t. Girls U14 County Cup
- u. Girls U14 County T20
- v. Girls U14 Knockout Cup
- w. Girls U15 Schools Indoor
- x. Girls U13 Schools Indoor
- y. Disability Premier League;
- z. D40 Pursuit;
- aa. D40 Quest;
- bb. D40 Challenge;
- cc. S9 Challenge; and
- dd. S9 Regional.

All decisions relating to the interpretation of these rules or to matches played in the relevant Competition (including regarding the rescheduling of matches, where appropriate) shall be made by the ECB and will be final and binding on all concerned.

1.2 Generic Rule 3.4 applies to all other County Age Group matches (across all age groups) that are not part of the ECB competitions listed under 1.1.

1.3 The ECB may delegate any of their powers and duties, including (where appropriate) to the Cricket Regulator.

All potential breaches of these Rules, or disputes arising from the application of interpretation of these Rules, shall be referred to a panel of three members of the ECB Recreational Discipline Panel (the “Panel”), whose decision shall be final and binding. The Panel shall consider any such matter in such manner and following such procedures as it considers appropriate and shall not be bound by rules governing the admissibility of evidence in judicial or other proceedings.

The Cricket Regulator shall confirm the identity of the Panel members to the relevant parties. If any party objects to any member of the Panel on the basis of a conflict of interest, the Cricket Regulator shall consider whether it is necessary to appoint a new member of the Panel.

2 Entry

2.1 Entry into any of ECB’s County Competitions shall be open to those County Boards recognised by the ECB.

2.2 Counties who participated in the previous year’s Competition shall automatically be included for the following season unless written notification to the contrary is given by 1st September in the year prior to the Competition. A County wishing to enter or be re-admitted to a Competition must give written notice to that effect to the ECB Competitions Team by 1st September in the year prior to the Competition.

2.3 It shall be a condition of entry that the Club is a bona-fide cricket club, affiliated to their local County Board, having a recognised home and away weekend fixture list and playing on a home ground of suitable standard.

Clubs must play their home matches on the main square of their home ground unless prior permission has been obtained from the ECB Competitions Team to move the fixture to an alternative ground. If such permission is not given ECB will order the match to be played on the opponent’s ground. Should the umpires report a pitch as being unfit, the ECB shall have the option of ordering the match to be replayed on the opponent’s ground, if time permits, or of awarding the match to the opposition.

Under these rules County Cricket Academies are ineligible to play in ECB club competitions. If a Club fails to fulfil their administrative responsibilities or any fixture in the competition, other than due to bad weather, they will be banned from entering the competition for the following season.

3 Qualification of Players

3.1 Regulations Governing the Qualification of Cricketers for England

To see regulations relating to Qualification of Cricketers for England, please go to ecb.co.uk.

3.2 Regulations governing the Qualification of Cricketers for Competitive County Cricket

To see regulations relating to Qualification of Cricketers for Competition County Cricket, please go to ecb.co.uk.

3.3 Definitions

- 3.3.1 Competitive County Cricket refers to matches played in the course of:
- (a) The Rothesay County Championship
 - (b) The Metro Bank One Day Cup and Vitality T20 Blast
 - (c) The Hundred
 - (d) Any other similar competition authorised by and designated as Competitive County Cricket by the ECB.
- 3.3.2 Qualification to play for England refers to matches played in the course of:
- (a) The National Counties Championship.
- 3.3.3 England and Wales means England, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.
- 3.3.4 The EEA means the European Economic Area and includes each of its member states as from time to time applicable. Currently the EEA comprises the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland, Cyprus (Greek part), Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania and includes each of its member states as from time to time applicable.
- 3.3.5 Residing and resident mean the occupation of a bona fide home (i.e. the only or main home of the Cricketer concerned) and the acquisition of temporary accommodation during the season may not fulfil this requirement.
- 3.3.6 Full Member Country means a country which is a full member of the International Cricket Council.

3.4 Qualification Criteria for Junior Cricketers (Open (Boys) and Girls)

Please note that playing restrictions included in any Visa that an individual holds will supersede any of the qualification regulations listed below.

The qualification criteria for all County Representative cricket for the Under 18 age group and below is as follows:

- 3.4.1 A player may only represent one County in any one Competition in any one season, with the exception of those players that are dual registered with another County (see separate information relating to dual registration, can be obtained by contacting competitions@ecb.co.uk).
- 3.4.2 A player shall be eligible to play for a County provided:
- i) The player is permanently resident within, or was born within, that County.
 - ii) Alternatively, the player is attending an educational establishment within that County (this does not include international exchange students who remain ineligible).
 - iii) Alternatively, the player has been a bona-fide playing member of a club within that County for at least the entire preceding season including playing in representative matches for that club.

- 3.4.3 County boundaries shall be as defined by ECB Cricketing County Boundaries as currently agreed.
- 3.4.4 A player may play for a County for whom the player is not qualified only if the player has not been selected by the County/Countries for whom the player is otherwise qualified and has obtained the written consent of that County/those Countries. Such consent shall not be unreasonably withheld.
There is no requirement to obtain the consent of the County of birth. In the event of a dispute the matter shall be referred to the ECB, whose decision shall be final.
- 3.4.5 A player who has played for a County, with a valid qualification for that County, during a season can continue to play for that County, if selected, the following season even if the player no longer has a current qualification (for example following a change of school).
The qualification remains valid from season to season, but lapses if the player does not represent the County during a season.
- 3.4.6 Age groups are defined by the player's age at midnight on 31st August in the year prior to the relevant season.

3.5 **Points of Clarification**

The following points are intended to answer some of the more frequently asked questions relating to the qualification criteria:

- 3.5.1 The "entire preceding season" membership requirement means that club membership during the current season does not count and players must have become a bona fide member of the club no later than 1st May during the preceding season.
- 3.5.2 Playing membership of a club includes membership of a soft ball cricket or 'Junior Colts' section if the club has one, and includes match play against other clubs.
- 3.5.3 Qualification by birth is excluded from the 'consent' arrangements for the sake of simplicity.
- 3.5.4 Players who have multiple qualifications are free to select the County that they wish to represent. Once that selection is made it remains in force for that season, but can be changed in subsequent seasons, without requiring consent, provided that the player still has a valid qualification for the newly selected County and notifies the player's former County in writing.
- 3.5.5 A player who is registered or contracted to a Professional County (PC) is eligible to play for the appropriate age group sides of that County. PC's wishing to register and contract a player not otherwise qualified for that County should seek the consent of the other County/Countries involved. Such consent should not be unreasonably withheld. Registering or contracting a player does not override the restriction on playing for only one County in any one Competition in a season, so that if a player has played, as an example, for a National County's Under 18 side and subsequently signs for a PC they cannot play in the PC's Under 18 team that season but could play for their Under 19 team if they run one.

- 3.5.6 It is generally accepted that Academy Directors should have responsibility for the cricketers in their charge, where they play and up to a point when they bowled and where they batted. Players joining a Professional County Academy would not automatically qualify for that County.

The Academy Director should draw up and agree a playing programme to meet the needs of the player, which might involve a player continuing to play for his National County or might mean a transfer to the Professional County (as already allowed in the case of contracted players) or a combination of both.

The existing regulations preventing a player from playing for more than one County in a specific Competition during the season remain in force, with the dual registration of players excepted. It was agreed that good communication between Counties, based on the best interests of the player, was the key.

- 3.5.7 Club membership during the preceding season will qualify a player to play only for the County in which the club is physically located (as per the ECB Cricketing County Boundaries as currently defined). Membership of a League that crosses County boundaries, affiliation to more than one County Board or participation in the Colts structure of another County will not alter the primary affiliation of the club to the County in which it is located and therefore the County qualification based on club membership of its players.

All disputes relating to these qualification criteria should be addressed to the ECB Competitions Team.

3.6 ECB Club Cup Competitions Eligibility Rules

For the purposes of this Rule 3.6, an “ECB Club Cup Competition” shall mean each of the club competitions known, for the purposes of the 2026 season, as the ECB National Club Championship, the Vitality Club T20 and the ECB Indoor National Club Championship.

- 3.6.1 A cricketer shall only be eligible to play for a club in an ECB Club Cup Competition if the club is a member of an ECB-recognised league (a “League”) and the cricketer is a bona-fide, fully paid-up member of that club who is also registered to play for that club under the rules of that League.
- 3.6.2 A cricketer shall only be eligible to play in an ECB Club Cup Competition for one club in any one season.
- 3.6.3 A cricketer who is registered for an ECB Premier League club shall only be eligible to play for that club in any ECB Club Cup Competition match.
- 3.6.4 A club shall be subject to the following rules regarding cricketers who are registered and contracted to a Professional (formally known as First Class) County Club (a “PC Cricketer”) in respect of any given ECB Club Cup Competition match:

- 3.6.4.1 It may play any PC Cricketer who is both under the age of 21 as at 30 September in the calendar year preceding the season in question and has not played for their PC during the current season in any of the County Championship, One-Day Cup or T20 Blast; and
- 3.6.4.2 It may play no more than one other PC Cricketer provided that the PC Cricketer in question has played i) at least two League matches for that club during the current season or ii) has played at least two League matches during the immediate previous season in the event that the ECB Club Cup Competition match in which they intend to play commences before two scheduled league fixtures have been played. League matches that were abandoned without a ball being bowled do not count towards this required total of matches played.
- 3.6.4.3 A PC Cricketer must meet either 3.6.4.1 or 3.6.4.2 for each ECB Club Cup Competition match they play in. It is recognised that 3.6.4.2 may result in a player being eligible for an early round match (based on status of played matches under 3.6.4.2 ii) and then not eligible for a later round match (based on status of played matches under 3.6.4.2 i).
- 3.6.5 Any player who has represented the men's team of any ICC Full Member country in the 12 month period up to and including 31 March of the current season will not be permitted to play in any ECB Club Cup Competition match in the current season.
- 3.6.6 A club shall play no more than one Category 3 player who is registered for that club by their League (an "Overseas Player") per ECB Club Cup Competition match.
- 3.6.7 Where no club Overseas Player is available to play for that club in an ECB Club Cup Competition match, that club shall not be permitted to register and play a new replacement Overseas Player in that match.
- 3.6.8 There shall be no limit on the number of Category 1 qualified cricketers (3.6.8.1) which a club is permitted to play in an ECB Club Cup Competition match, for which purposes:
 - 3.6.8.1 A cricketer is Category 1 qualified if: (i) they are a British citizen and were born in England or Wales; or (ii) they have been resident in England and Wales since 1 April 2025 for a minimum of 210 days between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026.
 - 3.6.8.2 Any player who has played any overseas cricket as a 'home', 'local' or 'non-overseas' player in the 12 month period up to and including 31 March 2026 will not be permitted to play as a Category 1 player in any ECB Club Cup Competition match in the current season.
- 3.6.9 A cricketer that plays for more than one club must be dual registered with all clubs with their league and must have played at least two league fixtures for the club before becoming eligible to play in any ECB Club Cup Competition match. League matches that were abandoned without a ball being bowled do not count towards this required total of matches played.

3.6.10 The relevant League and/or the ECB may, for the purposes of establishing compliance with this Rule 3.6, ask clubs to produce evidence of their players' eligibility for the purposes of the enforcement of this Rule 3.6, including (but not limited to) through the production of players' passports, bank statements and utility bills.

3.7 **Ineligible Players**

If a player has been fielded in a match and is alleged to have been ineligible to play for the relevant club, in accordance with the provisions in this Rule 3 and/or the rules of the specific Competition (where applicable), the matter shall be determined by a Panel in accordance with this Rule.

Where a club wishes to challenge the eligibility of a player, the challenge must be made in writing, contain the particulars of the grounds upon which it is made and be received by the Cricket Regulator within one week of the match to which it relates. The Cricket Regulator shall send a copy of any challenge to the club the player was fielded for, which shall lodge a defence to the challenge with particulars of the defence within 48 hours of receipt of the challenge.

The Panel will then consider whether the player was eligible to play in the match. If the Panel concludes that the player was not eligible to play, the club shall be deemed to have forfeited the match in which the player was fielded, and shall lose any points gained in that match, and (where appropriate) the opposing club shall advance to the next round of the Competition.

4 **Cricket Balls**

The Home side shall provide two new cricket balls for each match when balls are not provided by the ECB. The balls shall be of the standard laid down by the ECB for each Competition and shall be given to the umpires prior to the commencement of the match.

The Home side will also be responsible for supplying enough spare balls of equal standard. A new ball must be used at the start of each innings.

5 **Umpires**

5.1 Each club side shall appoint one Member of the ECB Association of Cricket Officials (ECB ACO), who has received DBS clearance, in each match unless the umpires are appointed by the ECB or the County Board. The umpires shall be appointed for the whole match and may not play in the match.

5.2 Counties shall appoint two umpires who shall be Full Members of the ECB Association of Cricket Officials (ECB ACO) and also have DBS clearance for each home match they play.

5.3 Where umpires are appointed by the ECB, both counties or clubs must complete an ECB Report form or other ECB-supplied online form.

- 6 **Scorers**
Each team shall provide their own competent, non-playing scorer in all matches. If a team fails to provide a scorer a player has to be nominated from the team to take up the duty for the entire duration of the match. The use of live electronic scoring is strongly encouraged for all matches.
- 7 **Age Group Definition**
Age Groups are based on the age of the player at midnight on 31st August in the year preceding the current season.
- 8 **Team Sheets**
Each side must provide the umpires with a team sheet before the start of the match identifying any player who has not reached the age of 18 on the date of the match and showing the specific age of any player who is 19 years old or younger. It is recommended that the ECB Team Sheet card (available from the local County Board) is used whenever possible.
- 9 **Helmets and Faceguards**
Any player under the age of 18 playing in any ECB Competition shall be bound by the ECB Regulations.
- 10 **Match Results**
It is the responsibility of the HOME side to enter the result and full scorecard details onto the appropriate site on play-cricket.com within 24 hours of the match being completed. The AWAY side should confirm that the summary result has been correctly entered within the next 24 hours.
Both sides must ensure that their squad details have been entered into play-cricket.com prior to each match they play.
- 11 **Code of Conduct**
All players, coaches or match officials shall be bound by the MCC Spirit of Cricket and ECB General Conduct Regulations.
- 12 **Coaching**
Coaching shall not be permitted from the sidelines during a match. In such an event, the umpire shall request the coach/manager/parent/spectator to stop. If this persists, the umpire shall have the power to report the matter to a Panel in accordance with Rule 1.2.

Generic Playing Conditions

1 Number of Overs per Bowler

- 1.1 Unless otherwise specified in the Playing Conditions for a specific Competition no bowler may bowl more than one-fifth of the amount of overs scheduled for the innings. However, in a delayed start, or interrupted match, where the overs are reduced for both sides, or for the side bowling second, no bowler may bowl more than one-fifth of the total overs allowed (unless such a number has been exceeded before the interruption), except that where the total overs are not divisible by five, an additional over shall be allowed to the minimum number of bowlers necessary to make up the balance - e.g. after 16 overs, rain interrupts play and the innings is reduced to 32 overs. Both opening bowlers have bowled 8 overs. Two bowlers can bowl 7 overs and three bowlers can bowl 6 overs. Bowlers 1 and 2 have already exceeded this limit. They count as the two bowlers who were allowed the extra over (7 as opposed to 6) and so any other bowlers are limited to 6 overs.
- 1.2 When an interruption occurs mid-over and on resumption the bowler has exceeded the new maximum allocation, they will be allowed to finish the incomplete over.
- 1.3 In the event of a bowler breaking down and being unable to complete an over, another bowler will bowl the remaining balls. Such part of an over will count as a full over only in so far as each bowler's limit is concerned.
- 1.4 Where possible, the number of overs bowled by each individual bowler shall be indicated on the scoreboard, from the commencement of an innings.
- 1.5 The allocation of overs per bowler will not be reduced as a result of the deduction of any penalty overs.

2 ECB Fast Bowling

The ECB Fast Bowling Regulations (updated for 2025) will apply to all matches in ECB Competitions subject to 2.1 below.

Age	Maximum overs per spell	Maximum overs per day
11 and below	4 overs per spell	8 overs per day
12 & 13	5 overs per spell	10 overs per day
14 & 15	5 overs per spell	12 overs per day
16 & 17	6 overs per spell	15 overs per day
18 & 19	7 overs per spell	18 overs per day

For the purposes of these Regulations a fast bowler is defined as a bowler to whom a wicket keeper in the same age group would in normal circumstances stand back to take the ball.

Team Managers and/or Captains are responsible for providing the umpires with a team sheet showing the ages of any player who is aged Under 19 or below before the toss for innings takes place.

Umpires are requested to ensure that this Playing Condition is strictly adhered to in all circumstances.

- 2.1 In matches of 20 overs or less per team where the competition regulations only allow bowlers to bowl less than or equal to the number of overs specified as the maximum in a spell in the Regulations the provisions requiring an equivalent number of overs from the same end to have elapsed before a subsequent spell can commence shall not apply (e.g. in any age group competition where a maximum of 4 overs per bowler is allowed these may be bowled at any time in the innings irrespective of the number of spells bowled).

3 Junior Fielding Restrictions

- 3.1 No player who is Under 16 or younger shall be allowed to field closer than 8 yards (7.3 metres) from the batters position on the popping crease on a middle stump line, except behind the wicket on the off side, until the batter has played at the ball. A fielder shall be allowed to move into the restricted area to make a catch or field the ball provided that they were outside the area when the stroke was made.
- 3.2 For players Under 14 and below the distance is 11 yards (10 metres).
- 3.3 These minimum distances apply even if the player is wearing a helmet.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 In addition any player who has not reached the age of 18, must wear a helmet when fielding within 8 yards (7.3 metres) from the batters position on the popping crease on a middle stump line, except behind the wicket on the off side. Any player whose sex is male must also wear a groin protector (box).

4 Law 15 – Declarations

Unless otherwise indicated, Law 15 will not apply in the Competition. The captain of the batting side may not declare the innings closed at any time during the course of the match.

5 Law 22 - Wide Ball - Judging a Wide

In addition to Law 22 the following will apply:

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.

Any offside or legside delivery which in the opinion of the umpire does not give the batsman a reasonable opportunity to score shall be called a wide. For guidance purposes, in adult cricket a legside wide shall be called if a ball passes on the legside outside the pads of the batter standing in a normal batting position.

6 Bowl-Outs

- 6.1 In the event of no result being obtained by other methods and where there is no reserve date on which to play the game, a bowl-out (outdoors or indoors) will take place to achieve a result.

Five players from each side will bowl two overarm deliveries each at a wicket (conforming to Law 8) from a wicket pitched at a distance of 22 yards (or the length of pitch applicable in the Competition) with, if practicable, bowling, popping and return creases marked (conforming to Law 7).

The side, which bowls down the wicket (as defined in Law 29.1.1) the 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 following shall also apply in respect of bowl-outs:

- 6.1.1 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.
- 6.1.2 If a bowler bowls a No ball it will count as one of the two deliveries but will not count towards the score of the team.
- 6.1.3 If the original match has started, then the five cricketers nominated to take part in the bowl-out must be chosen from the eleven cricketers and 12th man selected to play in the match. 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 the players in the squad as registered on Play-Cricket.
- 6.1.4 Each side will appoint a wicket-keeper to stand behind the wicket but out of reach of the stumps.

7 **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 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, 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 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.

8 **Average Run Rate**

A team's average run rate is calculated by dividing the number of runs scored in its innings by the number of legitimate balls received during that innings. In the case of the team batting first being dismissed in less than the number of overs allocated for their innings, the calculation will be based on the number of balls that the team was scheduled to receive and not on the number actually received.

In the case of the team batting second being unable to receive their allocated overs, the calculation of their average run rate will be based on the actual number of legitimate deliveries received by them during their innings. The average run rate can be calculated to any number of decimal positions and a tie can only be achieved if the average run rates are identical.

9 **Boundaries**

It is recommended that, other than in exceptional circumstances, the size of the boundary, measured from the middle of the pitch being used in the match, shall conform to the following dimensions:

Open and Junior*:

	Minimum	Maximum
All Adult matches	55m (60 yds)	70m (77 yds)
Under 16 & Under 17	50m (55 yds)	70m (77 yds)
Under 14 & Under 15	35m (38 yds)	65m (71 yds)
Under 13 and below	30m (33 yds)	55m (60 yds)

Women's and Girls'*:

	Minimum	Maximum
All Adult matches	50m (55 yds)	64m (70 yds)
Under 16 and Under 17	45m (50 yds)	55m (60 yds)
Under 14 & Under 15	35m (38 yds)	50m (55 yds)
Under 13 and below	30m (33 yds)	45m (50 yds)

** These dimensions are the requirements for the hosting of matches in ECB competitions.*

10 **Scoreboard**

In all competition matches it shall be the responsibility of the batting side to ascertain the details of the score, wickets and overs from the scorers and to see that the scoreboard is brought up to date with this information at least at the end of every over, assuming that no official means of updating the scoreboard is in place.