



CHANGES TO THE LAWS OF CRICKET IN 2022

Key points

Since the publication of the 2017 Code of the Laws of Cricket, the game has changed in numerous ways. The 2nd edition of that Code, published in 2019, made relatively minor changes. The 2022 Code, however, makes some rather bigger changes, from the way we talk about cricket to the way it's played. These changes will come into effect on 1 October 2022 for cricket played all around the world.

There are over 60 changes, ranging from small, linguistic nuances to alterations to the way the game is played. These are the 10 most notable changes.

Batters

The most striking change, which affects almost every Law, is the replacement of the gendered terms batsman and batsmen, to batter and batters. This was announced in September 2021. MCC believes that the use of gender-neutral terminology helps reinforce cricket's status as an inclusive game for all. The amendments are a natural evolution from work already undertaken in this area as well as an essential part of MCC's global responsibility to the sport.

LAW 1 - Replacement players

Up until now, it was not clear whether warnings, suspensions, and even dismissals applied to a replacement player. The introduction of a new clause, Law 1.2.3, explains that replacements are to be treated as if they were the player they replaced, inheriting any sanctions or dismissals that player has done in that match.

This is particularly relevant at a time when COVID replacements have become prevalent - the point of a replacement is to mitigate the disadvantage of losing a player, but should not produce any extra advantage.

LAW 18 - Batters returning when Caught

First trialled by the ECB in The Hundred, Law 18.11 has now been changed so that, when a batter is out Caught, the new batter shall come in at the end the striker was at, i.e. to face the next ball (unless it is the end of an over).

Under the previous Laws, a bowler could take a wicket, and still have to bowl at a set batter if the batters managed to cross. It was felt that the bowler should be rewarded with the chance to bowl at the new, incoming batter, if balls remain in the over.

LAW 20.4.2.12 - Dead ball

The new edition sees a number of changes to the Dead ball Law, the most significant of which is the calling of dead ball if either side is disadvantaged by a person, animal or other object within the field of play. From a pitch invader to a dog running onto the field, sometimes there is outside interference - if this is the case, and it has a material impact on the game, the umpires will call and signal Dead ball.

This Law is not to be confused with, but works alongside, Law 19.2.7, which says that if the umpire believes a ball, which comes into contact with a person, animal or object coming onto the field, would have reached the boundary, a boundary is awarded.

LAW 21.4 - Bowler throwing towards striker's end before delivery

It has long been the case that a bowler who sees the striker advancing down the pitch, before the bowler has entered his/her delivery stride, could throw the ball to attempt to run him/her out. However, this has fallen out of practice, and is more often a source of confusion than anything else (does the striker

have the right to hit that throw? Is the bowler throwing for a Run out, or simply bowling with an illegal action?). Given that, MCC has decided to remove the possibility with a change to Law 21.4. If a bowler throws the ball towards the striker's end before entering his/her delivery stride, it will now be Dead ball under Law 20.4.2.9.

LAW 22.1 - Judging a Wide

In the modern game, batters are, more than ever, moving around the crease before the ball is bowled. There are examples of a batter starting three feet outside leg stump, walking across to outside off stump, and back again, all before the bowler has released the ball.

It was felt unfair that a delivery might be called 'Wide' if it passes where the batter had stood as the bowler entered his/her delivery stride. Therefore, Law 22.1 has been amended so that a Wide will apply to where the batter is standing, where the striker has stood at any point since the bowler began his/her run up, and which would also have passed wide of the striker in a normal batting position.

LAW 25.8 - Striker's right to play the ball

We have seen, over the past few years, more and more attempted slower balls which go wrong, and land nowhere near the batter. Under the old Laws, the striker could run after these deliveries to play them, so long as the ball had not come to rest. This could potentially be unsafe, as well as not reflecting how cricket is designed to be played.

The new Law 25.8 allows the striker to play the ball so long as some part of his/her bat or person remains within the pitch. Should they venture beyond that, the umpire will call and signal Dead ball. As recompense to the batter, any ball which would force them to leave the pitch will also be called No ball.

LAWS 27.4 AND 28.6 - Unfair movement by the fielding side

Neither the wicket-keeper, nor any other fielder, is permitted to significantly alter their position while the bowler is running in to bowl. This has long been the case - the batter has a right to know where the field is placed.

However, until now, any member of the fielding side who moved unfairly, was punished only with a 'Dead ball' - potentially cancelling a perfectly good shot by the batter. Given the action is both unfair and deliberate, it will now see the batting side awarded 5 Penalty runs.

LAW 38.3 - Moving the running out of the non-striker

Law 41.16 - running out the non-striker - is one of the most controversial clauses in the Laws of Cricket. In recent editions, MCC have sought to change the emphasis of this Law, so that responsibility is put on the non-striker to stay in his/her ground.

This latest change goes a little further, removing this Law from 'unfair play' and moving it to Run out. After all, this is simply a run out, and there is nothing unfair about it.

LAW 41.3 - No saliva

The use of saliva to polish the ball has long been a concern for MCC. It is both unhygienic and open to abuse, with players using various types of sweet to alter their saliva.

During COVID-19, playing regulations were written in most cricket to state that saliva could no longer be applied to the ball. Data from international cricket has shown that this change had very little impact on the amount of swing. Players were using sweat to polish the ball, and this was equally effective.

With both of those in mind, the new Laws will not permit the use of saliva on the ball. Using saliva will be treated the same way as any other unfair methods of changing the condition of the ball.