

Date released: 30 September 2010

MCC has introduced eight amendments or clarifications to the Laws of Cricket which come into effect today.

The changes are aimed at providing more fairness to both sides and reducing the amount of playing time lost.

Bad light

Umpires will now be the sole arbiters of whether play should continue in poor light. The batting side will no longer have any say in the decision, which was often made for tactical reasons.

The toss

At least one umpire will also now be required to attend the toss and the winning captain must notify his counterpart of his decision to bat or field immediately.

Previously, captains could wait until ten minutes before the start of the game, but in some cases this was being exploited to the losing side's disadvantage - and therefore contravened the Spirit of Cricket.

Increased fairness

Other Law changes aimed at achieving more fairness between the teams include:

- giving batsmen who damage the pitch just one warning before penalty runs are issued, rather than two
- preventing bowlers from delivering the ball with their front foot having crossed an imaginary line between the middle stumps (e.g. declaring they were bowling over the wicket but releasing the ball as if they were bowling round the wicket)
- and forbidding bowlers bowling the ball into the ground to a team mate, which damages the ball and may waste time

Practice beyond the boundaries

Fielders will no longer be able to practice with a twelfth man or coach outside the boundary during a game, as this affords them an opportunity to prepare that is not granted to the batsmen in the middle.

Fielding athleticism

Twenty20 cricket has contributed to increasingly athletic fielding standards, and MCC strives to ensure the Laws deal with the challenges posed by the modern game.

Now, a fielder's first contact with the ball must be within the boundary or, if his is airborne, when his last contact with the ground was within the field of play. He may subsequently step outside the rope, but a four or six will be scored if he makes further contact with the ball whilst grounded outside the boundary.

Rare dismissals

The two final Law changes deal with very rare forms of dismissal. Law 28.1 has been amended so, if a batsman's bat breaks in the act of playing a shot and the broken part of the bat hits the stumps, he will now be out.

A new sub-section has been added to Law 29.1 to protect a batsman who is well in his ground - for example a sprinting batsman who has run past his stumps - but whose feet and bat happen to be in the air as the bails are removed. He will now be deemed to be in.