



ECB

ACO

ASSOCIATION OF
CRICKET OFFICIALS



Law 42 Unwrapped

Guidance Booklet

THE PREAMBLE – THE SPIRIT OF CRICKET

Cricket owes much of its appeal and enjoyment to the fact that it should be played not only according to the Laws, but also within the Spirit of Cricket.

The major responsibility for ensuring fair play rests with the captains, but extends to all players, umpires and, especially in junior cricket, teachers, coaches and parents.

Respect is central to the Spirit of Cricket.

Respect your captain, teammates, opponents and the authority of the umpires.

Play hard and play fair.

Accept the umpire's decision.

Create a positive atmosphere by your own conduct, and encourage others to do likewise.

Show self-discipline, even when things go against you.

Congratulate the opposition on their successes, and enjoy those of your own team.

Thank the officials and your opposition at the end of the match, whatever the result.

Cricket is an exciting game that encourages leadership, friendship and teamwork, which brings together people from different nationalities, cultures and religions, especially when played within the Spirit of Cricket.



Introduction

Such was the reputation of the players' behaviour in our game that popular English parlance has long used the term 'It's not cricket' to describe actions or words that are not honest or moral, and yet, in the 21st century, this very term can be applied to much behaviour that is now commonplace on a cricket field. It would be naive to pretend that in recent years there has not been a growing culture of dissent and other inappropriate behaviour that has seriously soured the game. Players dispute decisions, accuse each other of cheating, use language and gestures that are unacceptable and whole teams often behave unfittingly as a unit. ECB surveys of players and officials inform us that both players and umpires are leaving the game as a direct consequence of this and newspaper articles have reported that many officials even feel threatened and scared by what has gone on around them.

It is time to address this issue – and MCC (supported by ECB and ECB ACO) has done just that in the rewriting of Law 42: Fair and Unfair Play.

The focus of much that has been written and talked about on Law 42 is that it enables umpires to exclude a player for a time period or even for the rest of the match. This is often described (incorrectly) as 'the introduction of yellow and red cards' – but interpreting Law 42 and applying it is **much** more than just this. More importantly, Law 42 gives umpires the authority to intervene and manage (with the captain) the insidious behaviour, language and gesture that is blighting the game. The focus is on prevention and a deterrent, and if this is clearly understood and appreciated by all stakeholders, including umpires, then the imposition of penalty runs and temporary or total exclusions should be rarities.



Until now, cricket has been almost unique among major sports in **not** giving its on-field officials a way of dealing with unacceptable behaviour **during** the match. Law 42 changes that and brings cricket in line by empowering umpires to intervene **at the time** when they consider **anything** that is taking place to be **unfair**. There is no attempt to further quantify what unfair is or means. If one of the umpires thinks what they have seen or heard is unfair, then it is – see Law 2.6: ‘The umpires shall be the sole judges of fair and unfair play.’ But, in addition to this catch all, the umpires have been given the right to immediately penalise the offending team.

The ability to award penalty runs has existed for some years – the ball hitting a fielding helmet placed on the ground behind and in line with the wickets, would be the most common. But there are other instances where penalties can be awarded and there are many changes to the details of these – not least that umpires **can and will** award penalty runs for unacceptable behaviour.

This does not mean that quiet interventions earlier to prevent escalation are not to be encouraged – they are. A word to the captain and/or an offending player as a gentle or informal warning is still considered best practice in game and people management. But when the warning is not heeded, or something ‘kicks off’ without prior warning, Law 42 enables action to be taken **there and then**.

The process to be followed requires the umpires to come together, to agree the event deserves action and then to formally bring play to an end by calling ‘Time’. Then to bring the captain to you – this might mean bringing the batting captain onto the field – to advise them what is wrong and to warn them about future behaviour and its consequence.

As well as the actual issue of the warning itself, there is huge value in the ‘theatre’ of the action. Umpires coming together while play is underway – other than at the fall of a wicket or when an obvious issue needs to be discussed – is not usual. When this occurs, the players’ (and the spectators’) attention will be focused and everybody will know something is amiss and that **the umpires, with the captains, have taken charge of the situation**, which signals and indicates both preventive action and a deterrent against future actions.

Recommended best practice in the application of Law 42

This is best described by the diagram below, which offers a step-by-step approach.

1. A player has done something you think is unacceptable.

2. Immediately call 'Dead ball' - unless this disadvantages the non-offending team, in which case wait until the ball becomes dead.

3. Collect the ball from the fielding team.

4. Talk to your colleague and together decide the severity of the unacceptable behaviour (see below).

Agree the levels of offence - is it Level 1, 2, 3 or 4?

5. Call 'Time' if necessary.

6. Request the player's captain to come and talk to you.

Apply the appropriate sanctions for the level of offence.

7. What happens if the captain(s) will not do what you ask of them?

8. Record what happened and what actions were taken.

9. Call 'Play' once the required actions are completed.

After the close of play, the two umpires should report the incident and the sanctions applied to the organisation responsible for the game.

1. and 2. One umpire considers something unacceptable has taken place. This umpire will immediately call and signal Dead ball – **except** when the non-offending team would be disadvantaged by an immediate call. (For example, the striker hits the ball towards the boundary and, as the batsmen set off for runs, a bowler or fielder swears loudly and unacceptably. In this circumstance, the umpire would wait for the runs to be completed or the boundary scored, before calling Dead ball.)
3. Collect the ball – for all the usual reasons.
4. Get together with your colleague. The umpire who heard or saw something needs to explain what this was. The two umpires **together** need to determine whether an offence has taken place and, if so, whether the offence should be categorised as Level 1, 2 3 or 4.

Level 1 offences, as defined in the Laws, are:

- wilfully mistreating any part of the cricket ground, equipment or implements used in the match
- showing dissent at an umpire’s decision by word or action
- using language that, in the circumstances, is obscene, offensive or insulting
- making an obscene gesture
- appealing excessively
- advancing towards an umpire in an aggressive manner when appealing
- any other misconduct, the nature of which is, in the opinion of the umpires, equivalent to a Level 1 offence.

It is impossible to provide definitive guidance on how umpires should act. Some things are clear. Kicking the stumps over, knocking boundary markers out of the ground, throwing bats, breaking windows, raising the finger, running up to the umpire and appealing in their face, are all clearly actions that need to be dealt with as Level 1 offences.

A more contentious issue is deciding what is and what is not inappropriate language. Consider for example:

- Each person has a different tolerance threshold of what they consider acceptable.
 - One player’s ‘foul and abusive’ language is another’s ‘industrial’ language.

- Diverse cultures and religions will have different stances and the same words may be differently interpreted.
 - Umpires often have to deal with things being said in languages they do not understand.

The best advice is always to review language within the context of the game. What is said in an adult league match **might** require a different approach to the same words being used in a school or a youth game – ditto in a game between two ‘English’ league teams in a Saturday Premier League match and two Sri Lankan teams in a Sunday Tamil League match.

Umpires need to discuss tolerance levels with their colleagues before the game and then be consistent in their application.

Level 2 offences, as defined in the Laws, are:

- showing serious dissent at an umpire’s decision by word or action
- making inappropriate and deliberate physical contact with another player
- throwing the ball at a player, umpire or another person in an inappropriate and dangerous manner
- using language or gesture to another player, umpire, team official or spectator that, in the circumstances, is obscene or of a seriously insulting nature
- any other misconduct, the nature of which is, in the opinion of the umpires, equivalent to a Level 2 offence.

There is a difference between generic use of bad language and it being directed specifically towards another player, umpire, official or spectator. If a player confronts another player and swears at them, this is a Level 2 offence.

Level 3 offences, as defined in the Laws, are:

- intimidating an umpire by language or gesture
- threatening to assault a player or any other person except an umpire.



These are much rarer events. If you are concerned about the second clause excluding the umpire then consider that:

Level 4 offences, as defined in the Laws, are:

- threatening to assault an umpire
- making inappropriate and deliberate physical contact with an umpire
- physically assaulting a player or any other person
- committing any other act of violence.

These offences are rarer still, but have all occurred (sadly) on a recreational cricket field.

Note: Only those items specifically identified in the Laws as being Level 3 or 4 offences can be classified as such. Umpires are not at liberty to conclude that any other inappropriate behaviour constitutes a Level 3 or 4 offence.

Returning to the process to be followed:

5. The bowlers end umpire should now call 'Time'. Note that the time needed to resolve the situation, after which you will restart the game by calling 'Play', shall not be treated as an unscheduled interval. The time will instead be added onto the scheduled close of play time (or the maximum allowable time for the innings if that is what the regulations stipulate).
6. The umpires will now summon the offending player's captain. This might require bringing them onto the field, if it is the batting team.

The Laws require the captain to deal with their players. Therefore, the umpires are required to inform the captain what actions are required and for the captain to then carry these out. This is not a debate, and does not involve a discussion on the interpretation of events as he/she might see them – particularly if their interpretation is different to that of the umpires.

Umpires need to manage the conversation, advising the captain:

- what has taken place
- how it has been classified
- what the consequences are
- what the captain is required to do.

The umpires may decide that a sensible course of action is to give the captain some time to talk to the team to ensure that everyone knows what is required and why.

Required actions

Level 1

Unless a team has already committed a Level 1, 2, 3 or 4 offence, the first Level 1 transgression is merely a warning.

The captain must be advised:

- what has taken place
- that it is a Level 1 offence
- that the team is being warned
- if a further Level 1 offence is committed, penalty runs will be awarded to the opposition.

If this is a second or subsequent Level 1 offence, or they had previously committed a Level 2, 3 or 4 offence, the captain must be told there is an immediate award of five penalty runs to the opposition.

Level 2

The captain must be advised:

- what has taken place
- that it is a Level 2 offence
- that any subsequent Level 1 offences will result in the immediate award of penalty runs
- there is the immediate award of five penalty runs to the opposition.



Level 3

When Level 3 or 4 offences take place, there is likely to be (or have been) significant player interaction. Following the process already defined may be hard to do, but if you can, it will demonstrate authority and control. Staying calm is key.

The captain must be advised:

- what has taken place
- that it is a Level 3 offence
- that the offending player must be excluded immediately for a defined period
- there is the immediate award of five penalty runs to the opposition.

The detail of the exclusion is explained on the card you will have with you on the field and it is advised that you refer to the card, but for completeness here:

- The exclusion is for 20% of the overs the side were entitled to receive when the innings began (if it is a limited overs game) or 10 overs (if it is a timed game).
- If it is the bowler, another player must finish the over with all the usual issues this entails.
- If it is the batsman, he/she must leave immediately and another batsman takes over. The offender can come back, but only after the suspension has been completed, at the fall of the next wicket. If they are nine down or they lose the ninth wicket before the suspension has been served, that's the end of the innings.
- If a batsman or a fielder/bowler has overs still to serve at the end of the innings, these are carried forward – so the batsman cannot field and the fielder cannot bat.
- If the offending player is a wicketkeeper, only a nominated player (not a substitute) may replace them in this role.
- If the offending player is a runner or a substitute, the person they are acting for will suffer the penalty imposed.
- The umpire must signal to the scorers that a Level 3 offence has taken place.

Note: You will find videos of the new signals for both Level 3 and 4 offences on the ECB and MCC websites.

Level 4

The most likely Level 4 offence will be physical assault by one player on another, or two or more players fighting. The key action is not to get involved but to watch carefully and try to prevent escalation (ie other players joining in).

When the situation has settled down, the captain must be advised:

- what has taken place
- that it is a Level 4 offence
- that the offending player(s) must be excluded immediately
- if it is a bowler someone else completes the over
- if it is a batsman, he/she is marked as retired out
- there is the immediate award of five penalty runs to the opposition.

The umpire must signal to the scorers that a Level 4 offence has taken place.

7. There is a possibility that the captain may disagree with your course of action and refuse to remove his player(s) from the game. Should this happen, the Law is clear:
 - If it is one captain – award the game to the opposition.
 - If it is both captains – ask the players to leave the field of play and refuse to declare a result.

Umpires are advised to inform the captain(s) what the outcome of their not complying with your request will be and to give them time to reconsider. Then, to ask specifically if they are refusing to act as requested. Only if they confirm this is the case should you apply the relevant sanction.



8. Contemporaneous note-taking

It is essential that **both** umpires make notes of the whole event **at the time or immediately following and before play recommences**. Notes will include such detail as:

- the time and overs/balls bowled
- who has offended, what they did, who was spoken to and what actions were required
- the level of compliance by both player and captain.

9. Restarting the match

Call 'Play' and get the game underway.

Note the time you call 'Play' so you can add back the time taken to the finish time.

Post-match report

- Be brief - just the facts as they apply to the incident.
- Be factual - when, what, whom.
- Be neutral - others will decide whether (and if so what) further action is needed - it is not for the umpires to comment on.



Summary

Law 42 defines how the game is required to be played. From an umpire's perspective, it is as important as the foot fault No ball, or the leg before wicket Laws.

There are those that have suggested that Law 42 is a 'step too far'. Some have even suggested that they have no intention of applying it.

Others have suggested that the imposition of penalty runs will make no discernible difference to the outcome of most games – so why bother to apply it? There are some leagues that have used their playing regulations to 'get around or water down' Law 42.

ECB ACO understands these positions but believes the arguments to be fundamentally flawed, believing that umpires must uphold the Laws of the game and that any non-compliance of the requirements of Law 42 by qualified and competent umpires would be letting down the players, colleague officials and, most importantly, the game itself.

But – to end as we began – Law 42 is mostly about prevention and deterrence, and if this is clearly understood and appreciated by all stakeholders, including umpires, then the imposition of penalty runs and temporary or total exclusions should remain rarities.



Appendix

Law 42 players' conduct

42.1 Unacceptable conduct.

42.1.1 The umpires shall act upon any unacceptable conduct. Four levels of offence and the corresponding actions by the umpires are identified as Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 offences in 42.2 to 42.5.

42.1.2 If either umpire considers that the conduct of a player, at any time during the match, is unacceptable, the umpire concerned shall call and signal Dead ball. This call may be delayed until the umpire is satisfied that it will not disadvantage the non-offending side.

42.1.3 The umpire concerned shall report the matter to the other umpire and together they shall decide whether misconduct has occurred. If so, they shall determine into which of the levels the conduct falls, as set out in 42.2 to 42.5 below, and then apply the related sanctions.

42.1.4 For each Level 1 to 4, if the offence is by a batsman, the umpires shall summon the offending player's captain to the field. Solely for the purpose of this Law, the batsmen at the wicket may not deputise for their captain.

42.2 Level 1 offences and action by umpires.

42.2.1 Any of the following actions by a player shall constitute a Level 1 offence:

- wilfully mistreating any part of the cricket ground, equipment or implements used in the match
- showing dissent at an umpire's decision by word or action
- using language that, in the circumstances, is obscene, offensive or insulting
- making an obscene gesture
- appealing excessively
- advancing towards an umpire in an aggressive manner when appealing
- any other misconduct, the nature of which is, in the opinion of the umpires, equivalent to a Level 1 offence.

42.2.2 If such an offence is committed, 42.2.2.1 to 42.2.2.6 shall be implemented as appropriate, according to whether or not it is the first offence at any level.

42.2.2.1 The umpire shall call Time, if necessary.

42.2.2.2 Together the umpires shall summon and inform the offending player's captain that an offence at this level has occurred.

42.2.2.3 If the Level 1 offence is the first offence, at any level, by that team, the umpire shall:

42.2.2.3.1 issue a first and final warning which shall apply to all members of the team for the remainder of the match

42.2.2.3.2 warn the offending player's captain that any further Level 1 offence by any member of his/her team shall result in the award of five penalty runs to the opposing team.

42.2.2.4 If the Level 1 offence follows an offence, at any level, by that team, the umpire shall award five penalty runs to the opposing team.

42.2.2.5 As soon as practicable the umpire shall call Play.

42.2.2.6 The umpires together shall report the occurrence as soon as possible after the match to the executive of the offending player's team and to any governing body responsible for the match, who shall take such further action as is considered appropriate against the captain, any other individuals concerned and, if appropriate, the team.

42.3 Level 2 offences and action by umpires.

42.3.1 Any of the following actions by a player shall constitute a Level 2 offence:

- showing serious dissent at an umpire's decision by word or action
- making inappropriate and deliberate physical contact with another player
- throwing the ball at a player, umpire or another person in an inappropriate and dangerous manner
- using language or gesture to another player, umpire, team official or spectator that, in the circumstances, is obscene or of a seriously insulting nature
- any other misconduct, the nature of which is, in the opinion of the umpires, equivalent to a Level 2 offence.

42.3.2 If such an offence is committed, 42.3.2.1 to 42.3.2.6 shall be implemented.

42.3.2.1 The umpire shall call Time, if necessary.

42.3.2.2 Together the umpires shall summon and inform the offending player's captain that an offence at this level has occurred.

42.3.2.3 The umpire shall award five penalty runs to the opposing team.

42.3.2.4 The umpire shall warn the offending player's captain that any future Level 1 offence by any member of his/her team shall result in the award of five penalty runs to the opposing team.

42.3.2.5 As soon as practicable the umpire shall call Play.

42.3.2.6 The umpires together shall report the occurrence as soon as possible after the match to the executive of the offending player's team and to any governing body responsible for the match, who shall take such further action as is considered appropriate against the captain, any other individuals concerned and, if appropriate, the team.

42.4 Level 3 offences and action by umpires.

42.4.1 Either of the following actions by a player shall constitute a Level 3 offence:

- intimidating an umpire by language or gesture
- threatening to assault a player or any other person except an umpire (see 42.5.1).

42.4.2 If such an offence is committed, 42.4.2.1 to 42.4.2.8 shall be implemented.

42.4.2.1 The umpire shall call Time, if necessary.

42.4.2.2 Together the umpires shall summon and inform the offending player's captain that an offence at this level has occurred.

42.4.2.3 The umpires shall direct the captain to remove the offending player immediately from the field of play for a period in accordance with the following:

42.4.2.3.1 In a match where the innings are not limited to a number of overs, the player shall be suspended from the field of play for 10 overs.

42.4.2.3.2 In a match where the innings are limited to a number of overs, the player shall be suspended for one fifth of the number of overs allocated to the current innings at its commencement. If, in calculating the length of the suspension, a part-over results, it shall be considered as a whole over. Furthermore, any balls remaining in the over in progress at the time of suspension shall not count towards the overs for which the player is suspended.

42.4.2.3.3 If the offending player is a fielder, no substitute shall be allowed for him/her. The offending player may return to the field of play after serving the period of suspension and may bowl immediately.

42.4.2.3.4 If a bowler is suspended mid-over, then that over must be completed by a different bowler, who shall not have bowled the previous over nor shall he/she bowl the next over.

42.4.2.3.5 If the offending player is a not out batsman, he/she shall be replaced by another member of his/her team. The offending player may return to bat after having served the suspension only at the fall of a wicket. If no batsman is available to bat during a batsman's suspension, the innings is completed. If the offending player does not continue his/her innings for whatever reason, he/she is to be recorded as retired – not out.

42.4.2.3.6 If the offending player is a dismissed member of the batting side, the period of suspension will not commence until the start of the next innings. Furthermore, in these circumstances, the offending player may not act as a runner during the innings when he/she was suspended.

42.4.2.3.7 Warn the offending player's captain that any future Level 1 offence shall result in the award of five penalty runs to the opposing team.

42.4.2.3.8 Any overs remaining to be served from a suspension shall be carried forward to the next and subsequent innings of the match. A part over at the end of the innings shall not count towards the overs for which the player is suspended.

42.4.2.4 As soon as practicable, the umpire shall:

- award five penalty runs to the opposing team
- signal the Level 3 penalty to the scorers
- call Play.

42.4.2.5 The umpires together shall report the occurrence as soon as possible after the match to the executive of the offending player's team and to any governing body responsible for the match, who shall take such further action as is considered appropriate against the captain, any other individuals concerned and, if appropriate, the team.

42.5 Level 4 offences and action by umpires.

42.5.1 Any of the following actions by a player shall constitute a Level 4 offence:

- threatening to assault an umpire
- making inappropriate and deliberate physical contact with an umpire
- physically assaulting a player or any other person
- committing any other act of violence.

42.5.2 If such an offence is committed, 42.5.2.1 to 42.5.2.5 shall be implemented.

42.5.2.1 The umpire shall call Time, if necessary.

42.5.2.2 Together the umpires shall summon and inform the offending player's captain that an offence at this level has occurred.

42.5.2.3 The umpires shall direct the captain to remove the offending player immediately from the field of play for the remainder of the match and shall apply the following:

42.5.2.3.1 If the offending player is a fielder, no substitute shall be allowed for him/her. He/she is to be recorded as retired – out at the commencement of any subsequent innings in which his/her team is the batting side.

42.5.2.3.2 If a bowler is suspended mid-over, then that over must be completed by a different bowler, who shall not have bowled the previous over nor shall be permitted to bowl the next over.

42.5.2.3.3 If the offending player is a batsman he/she is to be recorded as retired – out in the current innings, unless he/she has been dismissed under any of Laws 32 to 39, and at the commencement of any subsequent innings in which his/her team is the batting side. If no further batsman is available to bat, the innings is completed.

42.5.2.3.4 Warn the offending player's captain that any future Level 1 offence shall result in the award of five penalty runs to the opposing team.

42.5.2.4 As soon as practicable, the umpire shall:

- award five penalty runs to the opposing team
- signal the Level 4 penalty to the scorers
- call Play.

42.5.2.5 The umpires together shall report the occurrence as soon as possible after the match to the executive of the offending player's team and to any governing body responsible for the match, who shall take such further action as is considered appropriate against the captain, any other individuals concerned and, if appropriate, the team.

42.6 Captain refusing to remove a player from the field.

42.6.1 If a captain refuses to carry out an instruction under 42.4.2.3 or 42.5.2.3, the umpires shall invoke Law 16.3 (Umpires awarding a match).

42.6.2 If both captains refuse to carry out instructions under 42.4.2.3 or 42.5.2.3 in respect of the same incident, the umpires shall instruct the players to leave the field. The match is not concluded as in Law 12.9 (Conclusion of match) and there shall be no result under Law 16 (The result).

42.7 Additional points relating to Level 3 and Level 4 offences.

42.7.1 If a player, while acting as wicketkeeper, commits a Level 3 or Level 4 offence, Law 24.1.2 (Substitute fielders) shall not apply, meaning that only a nominated player may act as wicketkeeper, even if another fielder becomes injured or ill and is replaced by a substitute.

42.7.2 A nominated player who has a substitute or runner will also suffer the penalty for any Level 3 or Level 4 offence committed by the substitute or runner. However, only the substitute or runner will be reported under Laws 42.4.2.5 or 42.5.2.5.

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