

20. ECB REGULATIONS

The full ECB Recreational Cricket Safety Regulations and Safety Guidelines – 2025, can be viewed at:
<https://www.ecb.co.uk/about/policies/regulations/recreational-cricket>

20.1 Fast Bowling

20.1.1 General

20.1.1.1 Regulation 20.1 applies to all players aged 19 (which is the maximum age for Age Group Cricket) or under in Hardball Cricket excluding Academy Players and EPP Players, who are subject to specific protocols established by the Talent Pathway Programmes. Regulation 20.1 does not apply to Softball Cricket.

20.1.1.2 These Regulations provide a mandatory limit to the amount a Fast Bowler can bowl during a Spell, and during a game, in order to reduce the risk of significant injury. They should be read alongside the ECB's Recreational Cricket Safety Guidelines which set out, amongst other things, a minimum and maximum number of overs that it is recommended a Fast Bowler should bowl per week.

20.1.1.3 A bowling delivery will count towards the overs limits set out in the table above when it is delivered during a match or in training with the intention of bowling at match (or near match) intensities. Deliveries, where there is a clear intention to bowl slower, should not be included, for example, walkthroughs or running in at half (or slower) typical run-up speed.

20.1.1.4 Having completed a Spell, a Fast Bowler must begin a period of rest and cannot bowl again, from either end, until the equivalent number of overs to the length of their Spell have been bowled from the same end.

- (i) A Fast Bowler can change ends without ending their current Spell provided that they bowl the next over allowed by the Laws from the other end. If this does not happen, their Spell is deemed to be concluded.
- (ii) If play is interrupted, for any reason, for less than 40 minutes any Spell in progress at the time of the interruption can be continued after the interruption up to the maximum number of overs per Spell for the appropriate Age Group. If the Spell is not continued after the interruption the Fast Bowler cannot bowl again, from either end, until the equivalent number of overs to the length of their Spell before the interruption have been bowled from the same end.
- (iii) If the interruption lasts for 40 minutes or more, whether scheduled or not, the Fast Bowler can commence a new Spell immediately.

20.1.1.5 A Fast Bowler must adhere to the restrictions associated with their age, not the level of Junior Cricket they are playing in. For example, a 13-year-old playing in an U15 match must follow the bowling regulations for a 13-year-old.

20.1.1.6 Once a player has bowled (or attempted to bowl) one ball at high intensity, they are deemed a Fast Bowler, and must therefore adhere to the overs limits in this Regulation 20.

20.1.2 Maximum Overs per Spell and per Day

20.1.2.1 The following table sets out the mandatory maximum number of overs a Fast Bowler can bowl per Spell and per day:
REVISED LIMITS 2025

Age in years	Max. overs per spell	Max. overs per day	Age in years	Max. overs per spell	Max. overs per day
11 & below	4 overs per spell	8 overs per day	16 & 17	6 overs per spell	15 overs per day
12 & 13	5 overs per spell	10 overs per day	18 & 19	7 overs per spell	18 overs per day
14 & 15	5 overs per spell	12 overs per day			

20.2 Fielding Regulations

20.2.1 General

20.2.1.1 Regulation 20.2 applies to all Junior Cricketers (U 18s) who participate in Hardball Cricket and Softball Cricket.

20.2.1.2 Regulation 20.2.2 sets out minimum fielding distances that players must comply with depending on their age.

20.2.1.3 The minimum distances specified in Regulation 20.2.2 must be measured from the batter's position on the popping crease on a middle stump line.

20.2.1.4 Players who are fielding behind the wicketkeeper on the offside are not required to comply with the minimum fielding distances.

20.2.1.5 The minimum distances set out in Regulation 20.2.2 apply even if the player fielding is wearing Protective Equipment.

20.2.1.6 For the avoidance of doubt, a player must adhere to the restrictions associated with their age and not the level of the Age Group they are playing in. For example, a 13-year-old playing in an U15 match must follow the minimum fielding distance for a 13-year-old (11 yards or 10 meters).

20.2.2 Players must observe the following Minimum Fielding Distances

Age in years	Minimum Fielding Distance (from the striking batter)
9 or younger	11 yards (10 meters)
10-13	11 yards (10 meters)
14-15	8 yards (7.3 meters)
16-17	No minimum distance but if fielding within 8 yards (7.3 meters) in Hardball Cricket cricketers must comply with Regulation 20.3.2.3
18+	No minimum distance but if fielding within 8 yards (7.3 meters) in Hardball Cricket see ECB Recreational Cricket Safety Guidelines for safety recommendations

20.3 Protective Equipment

20.3.1 General

20.3.1.1 Regulation 20.3 applies to all Junior Cricketers (U 18s) playing Hardball Cricket and is designed to reduce the risk of head, facial and other injuries within the game of cricket. Regulation 20.3 does not apply to Softball Cricket.

20.3.1.2 Any helmet required to be worn under Regulation 20.3 must meet the latest British Safety Standard BS7928:2013. A list of helmets which currently meet this standard can be found here: <https://www.icc-cricket.com/about/cricket/rules-and-regulations/helmets>. If a wicketkeeper chooses to wear a face protector instead of a helmet, it must meet British Safety Standard BS7929 –2:2009. If a player chooses to wear a neck protector with their helmet, it must meet the latest British Safety Standard BS7928:2013+A12019. Please refer to the ECB's Recreational Cricket Safety Guidelines for further information about selecting the appropriate helmet.

20.3.2 Players Under the Age of 18

20.3.2.1 Junior Cricketers **must wear a helmet** with a faceguard or grille when batting against a hard cricket ball during matches and practice sessions, and any Junior Cricketer whose sex is male (regardless of gender) **must also wear a groin protector** (box).

20.3.2.2 Wicket keepers under the age of 18 who are standing up to the stumps **must either wear a helmet** with a faceguard or grille, **or a face protector**, and any such player whose sex is male (regardless of gender) **must also wear a groin protector** (box). For the purposes of this Regulation, 'standing up to the stumps' is where the wicketkeeper can reach the stumps with an outstretched arm without having to move their feet.

20.3.2.3 Junior Cricketers aged 16-17 who are fielding within 8 yards (7.3meters) of the striking batter must wear a helmet with a faceguard or grille, and any such player whose sex is male (regardless of gender) must also wear a groin protector (box).

20.3.2.4 Parental or guardian written consent allowing a player not to wear a helmet (or face protector) will not be accepted.

20.3.2.5 If exceptional circumstances exist why a Junior Cricketer is unable to wear a helmet (or a face protector) as required by these Regulations, they (via their parents/carers) must contact the ECB for further advice by writing to safety in cricket@ecb.co.uk. They must explain in detail why they are not able to wear a helmet (or face protector) and provide supporting evidence as appropriate (for example, correspondence from a doctor or other health professional explaining why the player is unable to wear a helmet). The player must not carry out any of the activities described in Regulations 20.3.2.1, 20.3.2 and 20.3.3 until the ECB has confirmed that they can do so.

20.4 Eligibility of Junior Cricketers to Play in Open Age Cricket

20.4.1 General

20.4.1.1 This Regulation applies to all Junior Cricketers that participate in Hardball Cricket and Softball Cricket. It addresses the eligibility of Junior Cricketers to play in Age Group and Open Age Cricket, including Junior Cricketers that wish to play out of their usual Age Group.

20.4.1.2 Subject to the rules on player eligibility contained in this Regulation, Recreational Cricket Boards and Leagues may set their own Age Group eligibility requirements for their Junior Cricket competitions.

20.4.2 Juniors Playing in Open Age Cricket

20.4.2.1 Subject to Regulation 20.4.2.2 Junior Cricketers are not eligible to play Open Age Cricket until they are **12 years old**.

20.4.2.2 **In exceptional circumstances only**, a player is eligible to play Open Age Cricket who:

- Is 11 years old;
- has started school year 7;
- is selected for a squad in either County Age Group Cricket or a Sub-County Programme;
- has written approval from their County Talent Pathway Lead; and
- has written parental consent – form at <https://www.ecb.co.uk/about/policies/regulations/recreational-cricket>

20.4.2.3 Junior Cricketers (U 18s) who are eligible to play in Open Age Cricket may only participate in Open Age Cricket where **written parental consent is provided**.

20.4.2.4 Before allowing any Junior Cricketer to play Open Age Cricket, Clubs must consider the factors referred to below.

- The decision to play up should be a positive step in that Junior Cricketer's development and should not be based on a need to make up numbers in an older Age Group team or in Open Age Cricket.
- The Junior Cricketer should be of sufficient skill and/or physical capability to safely participate in the higher Age Group or in Open Age Cricket. Clubs should also be satisfied that the Junior Cricketer has sufficient confidence and emotional maturity to fit into a different Age Group team or in Open Age Cricket. A Junior Cricketer should not be put in a position that involves an unreasonable physical or emotional risk to them.
- Before playing their first game, the Junior Cricketer should have been invited to train with the older Age Group or Open Age Cricket team or should otherwise be familiar with at least some of the individuals in that team, for example through being coached by them or having interacted with them around the Club.
- The Junior Cricketer should be involved in all aspects of the game wherever possible, such as socialising, team talks, practice, decision making etc., so that they feel part of the team.
- The Club must ensure that they adhere to the ECB's Safe Hands Policy to ensure that a Junior Cricketer can safely participate in Open Age Cricket with adults. For example, the Club should have a plan in place, or suitable facilities, to ensure that the Junior Cricketer will not be required to change or shower alongside adults, and consideration must be given to the use of social media groups and transport to/from the cricketing activities.
- The Club must have appropriately DBS-checked adults to supervise Junior Cricketers playing in Open Age Cricket

20.4.2.5 Clubs must ensure that a Junior Cricketer playing up does not create a situation that places members of the opposing team in a position whereby they cannot play cricket as they normally would do against adult players. Where a Club considers that the playing of a Junior Cricketer out of their Age Group and/or in Open Age Cricket is leading to situations of potential disparity where there is a concern regarding the safety or ability of a player (or players) to compete, the processes contained in the Disparity Regulations must be followed.

The minimum age for Open Age cricket is 12 years. This applies to all club and district players who are not in a county or area squad. Written parental consent is required.

Exceptionally, players who are selected in a County U12 squad in spring for a summer squad - are also eligible to play Open age cricket **providing they are at least 11 years old, are in School Year 7 on 1st September in the year preceding the season, and have written parental consent to play and written approval from their County Talent Pathway Lead.*

This means boys and girls who are county squad players are able to play open-age group cricket if they are in a U12 age group and are a minimum of 11 years old on 1st September of the year preceding the season. District and club players who are not in a county squad must wait until they reach the age of 12 years before being able to play in any open age group cricket. Written parental consent is required for these players.