Cricket: a beginner’s guide

Getting started

The Gingins Cricket Club
Cricket: a beginner’s guide

Note: These random words are just some of the many terms used in cricket. Some of these terms are defined and can be found in this manual.
Cricket: a beginner’s guide (introduction)

The purpose of this document is to provide the reader (and young player) with some basic knowledge of the wonderfully complex and complicated game of cricket, and to do so in understandable terms. This should provide the reader with a key to unlock the door to a world enjoyed by many, and misunderstood by equal numbers.

Cricket is the second most popular sport in the world, after football/soccer. It is played in over 120 countries. See below for the top cricket playing nations.

Please note that there are many more rules and terms applied to cricket than are written in these pages. It may seem complicated at first reading, but as one develops in the sport, there are many aspects which become much clearer.

Basic rules

In essence the game sets two teams against each other in a match of skill, spirit, and application. The number of players per team is determined before the match, and cannot be more than eleven per side. The game can be played either:

a) over a set period of time; or
b) over a set number of overs.

This will be determined before the game is contested. One team will start in the field and the other will start by batting.

The initial goal for the fielding team is to restrict the batting team from scoring too many runs and for getting all of the batsmen out. The goal for the batting team is to score as many runs as possible without losing wickets in the allotted innings.

Once all the batsmen are out, or all the overs have been bowled, then the teams change roles and the fielding teams bats and the batting team fields. For each team the goal changes slightly. The fielding team will now want to restrict the batting team from beating the total it had set when it batted, either by restricting the runs or getting all the batsmen out. The batting team now has a target to achieve, and will need to plan how to beat the score set by the other team without losing all of their wickets.

The winner, in a limited overs match, is the team which scores more runs in their allotted batting innings. The rules are slightly different in a limited time match, but in junior cricket we have mostly limited over matches.

We will start by defining some terms, then focus on how teams score runs, how wickets are taken (getting out or dismissed), fielding, and finish with bowling.

Terms

In cricket there are a number of words (or terms) which are very unique to the game. Here are some examples of some of the terms used.
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**Batsman** – the batsman is the player for the batting side who is at that moment in bat.

**Batting side** – the team which is at that moment in bat.

**Bowler** – Is the player on the fielding side who delivers the ball to the batsman to get him dismissed.

**Crease** – the area in which the batsman stands to face a delivery, the area where the batsmen are safe in the event of an attempted run-out or stumping.

**Dismissal** – is another term for getting out, or losing a wicket.

**Fielding side** – the players who take to the field in an effort to get the batsmen out and to restrict the number of runs scored by the batting side.

**Innings** – the period of play of the batting side.

**Overs** – An over is a series of six legitimate balls delivered by a bowler to the batsmen.

**Stumps** – another term for the three sticks upon which the bails (smaller sticks) are set, or the end of a day’s session.

**Umpires** – are the officials on the field ensuring the game is played in the spirit and according to the rules of the game. The umpires also judge if the batsman is out after an appeal is made by the bowling team.

**Wicket** – the word wicket has a number of meanings in cricket; it can mean a dismissal, the set of stumps and bails, or the part of the field where the ball is being bowled (between the wickets).

**Wicket-keeper** – is the player standing behind the wickets ready to receive the ball bowled by the bowler if the batsman misses the ball, gets an edge or knick, and is the player to whom the fielders throw the ball in an attempt of getting a run-out.

Many more terms are used in cricket. Some of these can be found on the internet with their definitions at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cricket_terms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cricket_terms)

**Batting - Scoring runs**

The batting side can score runs in three manners:

1. **Off the bat** – the facing batsman ‘striker’ can hit the ball to all areas of the playing field in order to score runs. [Towards the end of this document there is a graphic found from Wikipedia showing where different scoring areas with the bat are.] When the striker hits the ball, the batsmen have the option to stay in their crease or to attempt to take a run.

   a. When the batsmen decide to take the run (this is plural because both batsmen need to run). If they make it to the opposite ends safely, the batsman who hit the ball will be rewarded with one run. [Point 4. In this section, explains running between wickets.]

   b. If the ball hits the ground before it crosses the boundary line, or demarcated area indoors, then four runs will be added to the batsman’s score.

   c. If the ball flies over the boundary line, or demarcated area indoors without ever touching the ground, then six runs will be added to the batman’s score.

2. **Byes or leg-byes** – if the batsman attempts a shot, and the ball is missed by the bat but ends up in an area of the field where the batsmen determine they could safely run from one side to the other without getting run out and then do so, the one run is added to the batting team’s score.
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(note this run is not credited to any one batsmen). The Bye occurs when the ball misses everything. A leg-bye when the ball hits the body anywhere, not just on the leg.

3. Bad deliveries – these are ‘no-balls’ and ‘wides’. Depending on the scoring system agreed upon before the start of the match.

   a. No-ball – a no ball is called by the umpire for the following:

      i. if the ball bowled reaches the batsman above the waist without bouncing
      ii. if the bowler oversteps the popping crease (the line at the end of the batting crease) at the bowler’s end before delivering the ball
      iii. if the ball bounces more than two times, or is rolling, before it reaches the batsman’s popping crease
      iv. if the umpire adjudges that the bowler has bowled the ball with a bent arm, in a throwing or chucking motion. At junior cricket level, the rule is sometimes quite relaxed on this. The umpire might point out to the bowler if he is not bowling correctly, before calling a no-ball for continued infractions.

   b. Wide – a wide is called by the umpire if the ball delivered is out of reach for the batsman to make a play at the ball. The delivery would be called a wide if the ball is too far down the off-side, leg-side (also known as the on-side) or over the head of the batsman. With regards to the wides down the leg-side or off-side in junior cricket, the teams will determine what leniency will be afforded the bowlers before the match, and the umpires will endeavour to maintain these parameters.

   c. At junior level these deliveries could add the following extras in the score of the batting side (it is important for the team to know what extra run rules apply before the match):

      i. one run, and an extra ball to be bowled in the over;
      ii. two runs, and an extra ball to be bowled in the over;
      iii. one run, without an extra ball to be bowled; or
      iv. two runs, without an extra ball to be bowled.

4. Running between wickets:

   a. Distance between the wickets in junior cricket is generally 20 yards. Therefore, the distance between creases in junior cricket is about 18 yards.

   b. Multiple runs - If the batsmen decide to take a run, and are in safely, they score one run. If they are able to run up and down, they will be rewarded with two runs, and so on. If the batsman does not make his ground by the time the ball is thrown in from the field and the bails are dislodged, he will be run-out (see above), and the runs do not count.

   c. Backing-up – the non-strike batsman is able to back up, which means to advance down the wicket after the ball has left the bowler’s hand. This will reduce the required distance that batsman has to run to get to the striker’s end.

   d. Calling - If the ball goes behind square, the call for a run is made by the non-strike batsman. If the ball is hit in front of square, the call for a run is made by the strike batsman. If the non-calling batsman believes that it is too dangerous to run, he needs to
shout ‘no’ straight away in a loud clear voice. If the batsmen are not sure if there is a run to be taken, the call should be initially ‘wait’ before a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ call.

**Getting dismissed (or out, or losing a wicket)**

In cricket there are eleven (11) ways in which a batsman can get dismissed. Some types of dismissals occur more regularly than others. In effect all would require the fielding side to make an appeal to the umpire, except bowled. The eleven include:

1. **Bowled** – this occurs when the bowler delivers a ball which the batsman is unable to successfully hit away from his stumps, and in turn the bails are dislodged (fall off). The ball may even touch the batsman’s bat or body before dislodging the bails.

2. **Caught** – this occurs when the batsman successfully hits the ball, either with his bat or a glove still touching the bat, but it is in the air and a fielder makes a catch before the ball touches the ground. [Note: when playing indoors, catches can be taken off the demarcated walls or the ceiling. This ruling will be made before the match and the teams will be informed about this.]

3. **Stumped** – this occurs when the batsman, having hit or attempted to hit the ball, is standing outside his popping crease when a quick-thinking wicket keeper dislodges the bails. The batsman is deemed to be outside his crease if no part of his body is touching the ground when the bails are dislodged. He is out even if a part of his body is in the air above the popping crease. The batsman makes his ground when a part of his body (like the foot or a hand or even his bat in his hand) is touching the ground inside his crease.

4. **Run-out** – this occurs when the batsman (either the striking or non-striking batsman) attempts to make a run, and is out of his ground when the ball is delivered from a fielder which results in the bails being dislodged. [Regarding ‘out of his ground’ refer to the ‘Stumped’ above.]

5. **Hit wicket** – this occurs when the batsman tries to hit the ball (successfully or unsuccessfully) and with his bat or body knocks the bails off the stumps.

6. **Leg Before Wicket (LBW)** – this occurs when the batsman attempts a shot, or not, and misses the ball and the ball hits him in the leg (or other part of the body – other than the glove) as the leg is before the wickets. The bowler appeals that the batsman would have been bowled had the batsman not gotten his body in the way.

7. **Obstructing the fielders** – this occurs when the batsmen running between the wickets deviate too much from the line that they are running to get to the other side in order to prevent the fielder from being able to make a clean throw at the stumps.

8. **Hit the ball twice** (also known as ‘double hit’) – This occurs when the batsman hits the ball twice.

9. **Handling the ball** – this occurs when the batsman plays the live ball with his gloves, maybe to prevent the fielding side from making a play.

10. **Timed out** – this occurs if the batsmen take too long (deemed about three minutes) to get ready for the next delivery, the fielding side can appeal to the umpire to give the offending batsman out. Taking too long, could also occur when a batsman takes too long to come in for a batsman already given out.

11. **Retired out** – this occurs if the batsman leaves the playing field without the permission of the umpire.
Fielding

Fielding is possibly one of the more complicated aspects of cricket. This document will not talk about the techniques of the long barrier, etc but rather focus on some of the places in the field where the fielders may be and the name of the fielding positions. The purpose of fielding positions and changes to the field is to restrict the number of runs scored by the batsmen and with a hope of getting them out.

In the matches we play, and at the venues we play them, there are often local rules which apply to scoring runs and the number of players in each team. Therefore, the bowler, together with the captain and wicket-keeper, may determine where fielders should stand. The field set up is based on the fielding team’s knowledge of the batsman facing the delivery, his tendencies of where he likes to hit the ball, and the the type of delivery the bowler is intending to bowl.

Other than the wicket-keeper (behind the stumps) and the bowler (who becomes a fielder as soon as he delivers the ball), other field placing used often are: Long-stop, Point, Cover, Mid-off, Mid-on, Square-leg, and Sweeper. Please see the diagram below for all the possible fielding positions.

Bowling - delivering the ball

Bowlers must deliver balls in the attempt to get batsmen out or restricting the number of runs scored. Bowlers can deliver the ball from either side of the wicket at the non-striker’s end. If a right-handed bowler bowls from the left-side of the wicket, it is called ‘over the wicket’. If he bowls from the right-hand-side, it is called ‘around the wicket’ or ‘round the wicket’.

A bowler may deliver the ball fast, slow or with spin. Different bowlers begin to specialise on different types of deliveries depending on how much success they have had with different styles of deliveries. Remember it is not how you deliver the ball it is the result of the delivery that matters. The best bowled ball may go for 4 runs, and a less good delivery may get the batsman out.

The bowler needs to have a plan of where he wants the ball to pitch, and where he wants his fielders to stand to give them the best opportunity to restrict the runs from the batting side, and to get the batsman out.

Final Words

All the above may seem very complicated, but believe us, it is not. Once children start playing it all comes easily in a very short time. Cricket is a wonderful team game of skill, athleticism, and tactics. Therefore we can truly say it is an all round sport which can be practiced from a very early age by both boys and girls. To become good at cricket, like many other sports, requires application and dedication. At Gingins Cricket Club (GCC) we endeavour to provide the environment to fulfil this.

An essential element of cricket is the notion of “fair play”, for example a batsman is expected to walk, i.e. declare himself out if he thinks he is out, even if the umpire is in doubt. Although the concept of fair play is sadly diminishing in many sports, including even in cricket, we at the GCC believe it needs to form one of the pillars in the training of the cricketers from a very early age. It is an essential lesson that is transferrable to the lives of the children and cricketers off the cricket pitch.
Annexe

Scoring shots from a right-handed batsman’s perspective

![Diagram showing various shots in cricket from a right-handed batsman's perspective.]


(Note: For left-handed batsmen, it is reversed):

Some other facts of cricket

1. Cricket can trace its origins back to the 16th century, and has evolved a lot since then. The first international match was played in 1844 between the USA and Canada.

2. Today's cricket is the second most popular sport in the world (after football/soccer), and is played in over 120 different countries.

3. The top cricket playing nations, those participating in Test* cricket, are:
   - Australia
   - Pakistan
   - Bangladesh
   - South Africa
   - England
   - Sri Lanka
   - India
   - West Indies
   - New Zealand
   - Zimbabwe

* Test cricket, in short, is an international match played over five days, with both sides having two batting innings.

4. The following countries are also prominent in international competitions:
   - Ireland
   - Kenya
   - The Netherlands

(Note: Fielding positions for a left-handed batsman is reversed)
Instructions on the internet:
Other than the coaching received through the Gingins Cricket Club, the internet is a great source to learn quickly about the different aspects of the game. On the internet, and including YouTube, there are a number of instructional video clips for beginning cricketers. Some of these include:

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