

# A Basic Guide to Umpiring for Players

Article courtesy of Shepard Neame League (Author unknown)

## Introduction



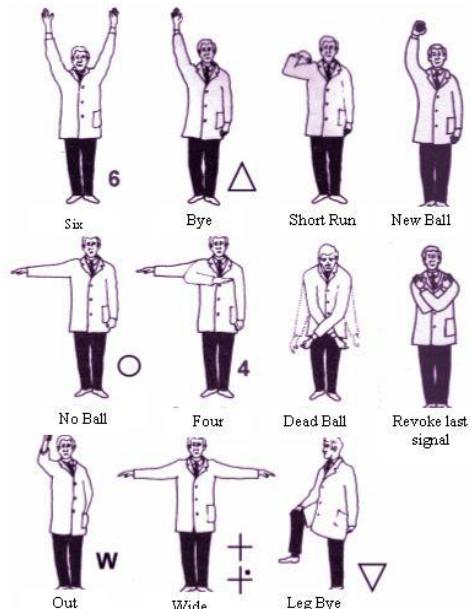
No cricket match can take place without umpires, however most cricket matches are played without appointed umpires. The purpose of this Guide is to give players the confidence to take their turn as an umpire to ensure that a match can take place.

In matches without appointed umpires, the Team Captains carry out most of the administrative duties of umpires (the number of overs; if game is playable (having to consider ground conditions, weather and light; who will bat first etc.)

leaving just the umpiring to the ‘men in white coats’. These umpiring requirements are briefly covered in this Guide, are not too difficult and will enable you to make a valuable contribution to any match. Remember that umpiring is an art. Always try to remain calm, never be seen to act in a hasty or pressured way and you will learn something every time you umpire.

You cannot be expected to know all the 42 Laws in detail. While you have the ‘white coat’ then you and your colleague, together with the scorers, are the third team on the field. While you are in that role, act as a team and always remember that two heads are better than one. You will not need to consult your colleague after every ball, however, if something happens and you are unsure what to do, it is essential that you BOTH agree on what to do, after discussion – it is what qualified umpires do quietly all the time.

## General



Unless the weather is too hot, always wear the ‘white coat’. It is your symbol of authority and it distinguishes you from the players. In very hot weather, wear something sensible, such as your normal trousers, so that you stand out and do not appear to be a player. DO NOT wear shorts or coloured summer wear. Try to look official.

Before the start of the match, if you are the Home team umpire, ensure that the groundsman, or your Captain or his nominee, has watered in the stumps and placed them in the correct position or do it yourself. Also ensure that boundary flags or markers are in place. If there are sightscreens, make sure they are outside the boundary, or are ‘roped off’ with the flags or markers, so that the boundary passes in front of them. (At a home game these duties should normally be organised by the Captain and shared amongst the players. At an away game, there will be no action for you, except to familiarise yourself with the ground, e.g. to check for any overhanging trees, where a ‘6’ will be scored if the ball first makes contact with them.)

Ensure that 2 bails are on the stumps at your end or are in the ‘white coat’ you have selected or been given. Also have six (6) stones or coins (plus one in your other pocket in case of losses) so that you can count the number of balls in each over. If a spare bail is available, take one in case of breakages to the match bails.

When starting a match, or restarting after a break, do not rush. Before clearly calling ‘PLAY’, count the number of fielders, confirm the batsmen, the bowler and the fielders, your colleague and the scorers, are all ready.

When a wicket falls and at any break in play, including ‘drinks’, take control of the match ball for that innings – the fielding side MUST pass it to you or your colleague. If you need to remake the wicket, do so, but remember that you only replace stumps or bails when the ball is dead. Only give it to your colleague or replacement (as it is likely that most of you will umpire for short spells, of say 10 overs at a time) or back to the bowler when play restarts.

At any break in play, including drinks, rain etc., and when an innings is completed, on time (overs) or when last wicket falls, and at the end of the match, the umpire at the bowlers end should clearly call ‘TIME’.

### **When standing at the bowlers end**

Do not allow a bowler to start any over or delivery until the striker is ready to receive the ball and knows the bowlers action, such as ‘right arm over’ or ‘left arm round’ etc. Also check that the sightscreen (if you have one) is correctly placed.

When the last ball of an over is obviously dead (when both batsmen and fielders cease to regard it as in play) then clearly call ‘OVER’.

You should usually move to the side of the wicket to which the ball has been struck to give you a better chance of making good Run Out decisions at your end, but do not put yourself in direct line of throw from a fielder. You will soon learn from experience.

Then, if you can get just the two main duties right – which are to count consistently up to six and to signal ‘No-balls’, ‘Wides’, ‘Byes’ and ‘Leg Byes’ and boundaries (4s and 6s) to the scorers, then you will be well on the way. Get your colleague to help you count to six by

giving an agreed signal after the fifth ball of the over. CLEARLY CALL and SIGNAL ‘No-balls’ and ‘Wides’ as they happen – to tell the players. Then, when the ball is dead, REPEAT those signals to the scorers, and remember to ALWAYS get an acknowledgement from them for all your signals. Do not re-start the match until you have. Remember that if you have to give two (2) signals, such as ‘byes’ and ‘boundary four (4)’, you MUST receive two acknowledgements from the scorer(s).

There is no magic formula for the more difficult tasks, namely LBW, NO BALL, WIDE, and LEG BYE. However the following basics should help.

**LBW** – Replay the ball over in your mind. Do not be rushed into a decision. There are six ‘MUSTS’ for you to give the striker out.

It must be a fair ball, not a No Ball.

There must be an appeal; you cannot give the striker out if there is no appeal.

The ball must have pitched ‘wicket-to-wicket’ or on the strikers off side.

It must have first touched the striker, not his bat.

It must have first hit the striker ‘wicket-to-wicket’ – though if no shot is played, the first hit can be outside the off stump.

It must be going on to hit the wicket.

And finally – One of the most important rules when making an lbw decision is a batsman CANNOT be given out if the ball pitches outside leg stump.

Any doubt and ‘NOT OUT’ is your correct decision. There is no need for explanation.

**NO BALL** - (from which the striker cannot be out ‘Stumped’.)

Back foot – where FIRST lands must be wholly within the Return Crease (side line).

Front foot – where FIRST lands must have some part behind Popping Crease (front line).

This can be in the air.)

High Full Pitch (Beamer) – Slow bowler – ball passes striker standing upright at crease above SHOULDER height.

High Full Pitch (Beamer) – Any other delivery – ball passes the striker standing upright at crease above WAIST height.

Ball bouncing MORE THAN TWICE or ROLLING ALONG THE GROUND before reaching the Strikers Popping Crease.

Ball COMING TO REST in front of strikers wicket – automatically becomes ‘Dead Ball’ – so no hitting it!

**WIDE** – (From which you can be out ‘Stumped’.)

If the striker cannot play a normal cricket stroke because the ball passes:

Wide of where he is standing in his normal guard position.

Wide of where he is standing.

Remember to take into account the height of the striker, and that he cannot move to make a ball into a ‘Wide’. Also, if he brings the ball within reach by moving, and then leaves it, it is not a ‘Wide’.

**LEG BYE** - Allowed if striker attempts to play, or tries to avoid being hit by the ball.

Otherwise wait until the ball is dead or batsmen complete one run (as batsmen can be ‘Run Out’), then call and signal ‘Dead Ball’ and if necessary return the batsmen to their original ends.

### **When standing at the strikers end**

You must be aware of the possibility of a ‘No-ball’ for more than two players behind or over the line of the Popping Crease on the ‘leg side’ and also for ‘encroachment’ by the wicket keeper (where gloves or cap or helmet are in front of the stumps, not behind them).

Remember the call is for the players; the umpire at the bowlers end should then repeat the signal to the scorers and receive an acknowledgement. Also be prepared to give decisions for ‘Stumped’ and ‘Run Out’ appeals.