



Umpiring the basics

Learning how to umpire not only broadens your knowledge of the game (and hopefully increase your enjoyment), but also means that the umpiring duties are fairly distributed amongst the team rather than forced upon the few who claim to know the rules.

Despite rumours, umpiring isn't too onerous a task, and can even be quite enjoyable; sometimes it's better to be out there taking in the atmosphere than sitting on the damp grass 200 yards away.

Therefore, here are the main rules an umpire needs to know adequately to manage a simple friendly game. Please take some time to read them and approach the committee members or the senior pros if you have any questions. Alternatively, check out the official [Lords](#) site for more detailed rules.

Bowlers

Always indicate to the Batsman the bowler's action. eg Right/left Arm Over/Round the wicket. Right/Left is the hand with which they will bowl. If he is bowling with his bowling arm closer to the stumps than his non bowling arm then he is bowling *over*. Otherwise he is bowling *round*. Strictly speaking, if a bowler does not inform you of his action you can call a no-ball.

Batsmen

Aside from never thinking they are out if you give them, batsmen will usually ask you for their guard when they first come in. Stand behind the stumps, ask the batsman to hold his bat vertically and usually side-on (possibly the only time he'll show a straight bat for the duration of his innings) then respond to his call as follows;

- **1 or leg stump** - ensure the bat is aligned with leg stump
- **2 or middle and leg** - ensure the bat is aligned mid-way between middle and leg stumps
- **middle** - ensure the bat is aligned with middle stump
- **middle and off** - ensure the bat is aligned mid-way between middle and off stumps
- **off stump** - ensure the bat is aligned with off stump and get prepared for some LBW appeals

Overs

Count to 6. This may seem simple but can crucially affect a game if you get it wrong. No-balls and wides and wickets can interrupt your concentration. If in doubt ask the other umpire and then the scorer. Also, if you are the square leg umpire, remember to count too.

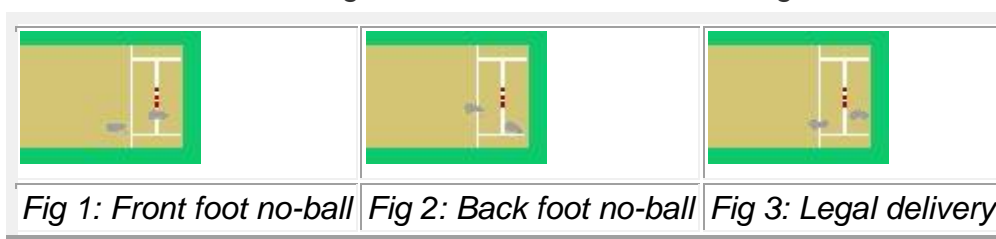
Wides

The white lines are NOT a guide to wides (they're there for the no-ball rule which follows), but it's true to say that if the ball gets anywhere near them then it's probably a wide. One of the biggest problems that batsmen have is that (thanks to the tv coverage now available of one day matches) they think that ANYTHING down the legside is a wide. Well it's not. So don't be pressurised into giving a wide. It has to be outwith their reach. Don't forget that a wide is a ball that the batsman cannot hit from a normal stance, but if he moves towards it, bringing it within reach, then it's not a wide. Stretch both arms out to signal this and call *wide ball* at the same time. Don't forget to make sure an extra ball is bowled in the over.

No Balls

There are 3 rules, one for each foot, one for height and one for fielding positions.

1. Part of the front foot must be behind the popping crease on delivery; it doesn't have to be grounded (ie. someone may bowl on his toes, but as long as some part of his foot is breaking the vertical plane then it's OK). See Fig. 1.
2. Unknown to many, there is still a back foot rule that applies, and this says that the foot must be within the Return Crease (this is the line that runs at right angles to the stumps and popping creases). If any part of the back foot is outside or even touching this line it is a no-ball. See Fig 2.



3. If the ball is delivered and passes the batsman above waist height without bouncing, whilst he is in the crease (i.e. he has not advanced down the wicket) then it is a no-ball. Although this should be your decision is your decision it may be called by the square leg umpire who is in a better position to judge.

An arm outstretched to the side is the correct signal for a no-ball, plus a call of *no-ball* too. Don't forget to make sure an extra ball is bowled in the over.

Extras - Byes

If the ball doesn't touch the batsman or his pads, and then gets away from the keeper and the batsmen run, this is a bye and is signalled by raising your arm straight up in the air. Signal this as the batsmen are running.

Extras - Leg Byes

If the batsman misses the ball with his bat or gloves and it hits his pads or body, or if the batsman is struck whilst taking evasive action then the batsmen can run leg-byes. If no attempt is made to play a shot then they are not allowed to run and should be sent back. The correct signal is to raise your leg and touch it; there's no arms in the air, so ignore anyone who does that because they are wrong!

Appeals

Whenever the fielding side think a batsman is out then they should appeal to the umpire, usually in the form of the vociferous **HOWZAT!** Or, in the more genteel world of social cricket, the occasional *That must be out, umpire* can be heard. Even when middle stump has flown out the ground and impaled the wicketkeeper then the batsman is entitled to wait until the appeal/decision scenario has been acted out (or not out, as the case may be). To give a batsman out, raise your index finger and say **That's out!**

There are ten ways of getting out, listed below.

Bowled

One or more bails has been dislodged by the ball striking the batsman's wicket as he attempts to defend it. Be wary of high winds and unscrupulous wicket-keepers who may kick the stumps in a villainous attempt to deceive you. See [Law 30: Bowled](#).

Caught

If the batsman has struck the ball in the air, be it the thinnest of edges or the meatiest of thwacks to cow corner, if a fielder catches it and has it under control then the batsman is out caught. If clothing has been used to inadvertently take the catch (ball landing on top of a soldier's spiky helmet (oo), disappearing down the back of a ducking fielder's jumper, etc.) then the catch stands. If clothing has been deliberately used (big pair of woollen mittens, kiddy's paddling pool, etc.) then you're either playing It's A Knockout or you think it's baseball. Either way the batsman is not out and five runs are awarded in addition to any completed. See [Law 32: Caught](#).

LBW

Here goes. How many times have you seen the ball beat the bat and are subsequently amazed that the stumps haven't been flattened? At the 1999 DIAS v EIS wash-out, a bowl-out yielded the tell-tale result of DIAS winning 4-3 after each side had delivered about 40 balls. While this says much for the lack of bowling ability of both teams, at our level of cricket it reveals at least one other thing; the batsman should be given the benefit of the doubt if you are not sure that the ball would have gone on to hit the stumps. Most appeals are not out! See [Law 36: Leg Before Wicket](#).

The factors to consider in the making a decision are;

1. where the ball pitched

2. the line of the delivery
3. how far the batsman was from the stumps
4. where it hit him relative to the stumps, both in height and alignment

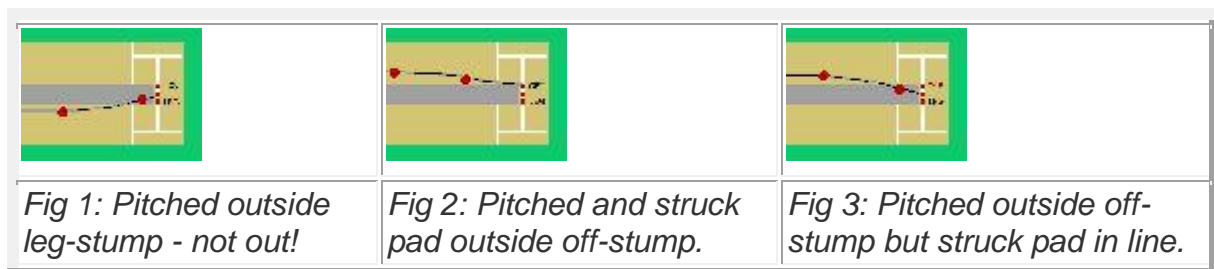
And now, the law itself.

If the ball has hit the bat first, even with the faintest of snicks, the batsman is *not out*.

Any ball that pitches outside the *leg*-stump can never ever be out LBW. It doesn't matter if no shot is played, or if the ball would have smashed all 3 stumps out of the ground; if it first pitched outside the leg stump it is not out. See Fig. 1.

If the ball strikes the batsman's pad outside off-stump, then you have to consider whether or not the batsman was making a genuine attempt to play the ball. If he was then he is *not out*, even if it looked as though the ball would have demolished the whole set. If he wasn't playing a shot (which includes tucking the bat behind the pad to such an extent that it is hidden) then the batsman is out if you think the ball would have gone on to strike the stumps. Bear in mind the words of warning in the first paragraph. See Fig 2.

If the batsman is playing a shot, the ball must hit him in line with the stumps, i.e. have pitched on the stumps or to the off-side and struck the pad in line with the stumps. Again, if it looks like it would have gone on to hit the stumps then the batsman could be out. See Fig. 3.



Don't forget that height comes into the equation too. If the ball hits the batsman above the knee-roll of the pads it may well have been on its way over the stumps, unless the batsman is one of our famed Munchkins whereby an LBW shout to a ball plugged in their chest may be legitimate.

Watch too where the batsman has taken his guard. Is he out of the crease or close to the stumps? If the batsman takes a good stride and the ball hits him on the front pad then the ball still has a couple of yards to go before it reaches the stumps which is ample time for it to miss.

Finally, also consider the bowler's point of delivery when assessing the projected path of the ball. Most bowlers deliver from wide of the stumps and so the ball needs to be straightening to hit the stumps, unless the batsman is pinned back in his crease (painful).

Batsmen never think they are out when given but you are the one with the best view. Ignore their chat and tell them to read the scorebook but be wary of batting next time they are standing at the other end!

Stumped

This will be an appeal to the square leg umpire. See [Law 39: Stumped](#).

If the batsman does not have any part of his bat or his person *behind* the line when the wicketkeeper removes the bails with the ball in his gloves immediately following the bowler's delivery then the batsman is out stumped.

Behind the line means just that; if his heel, toe or bat is on the line, and no part of it is actually behind it, he is out. Be sure the wicketkeeper has taken the ball after it has passed the stumps and that he has gathered it cleanly before taking the bails off. Failure to do either means the batsman is not out.

Batsmen can be out stumped off a wide.

Run-Out

This could be an appeal to either umpire. See [Law 38: Run Out](#).

If, in the event of attempting a run, the wicket is broken either by a direct throw or by a fielder with the ball gathered cleanly in his hand(s), the batsman closest to the broken wicket is run out if no part of his bat or person is grounded on or behind the line. If the wicket was previously broken, e.g. the batsmen are running overthrows after an unsuccessful direct hit, then the fielder must remove a stump with the ball in his hand (and not, as a friend of mine used to do, chase the loose ball having already removed a stump).

Batsmen can be run out off a wide or a no-ball.

Hit Wicket

If, while attempting to play or evade a delivery, the batsman breaks his own wicket, then he is out hit wicket. See [Law 35: Hit Wicket](#).

Handled the Ball

If a batsman handles the ball whilst it is in play then he may be given out handled the ball. The ball striking the glove in the course of playing a shot is not considered handling the ball, but knocking the ball away with the hand if it appears to be going on to the stumps, or picking it up whilst it is in motion can constitute grounds for dismissal. Typically, appealing for the latter is considered bad form but I've seen a batsman given out for it in a particularly heated Ferguslie-Kelburne derby match. See [Law 33: Handled The Ball](#).

Hit the Ball Twice

Deliberately striking the ball twice in an attempt to score runs is ground for dismissal, e.g. flicking up a grounder and swiping it over square leg will see you follow suit. Knocking the ball away in an attempt to defend your wicket is not grounds for dismissal. See [Law 34: Hit The Ball Twice](#).

Obstructing the Field

Deliberately barging a fielder about to take a catch, run someone out or prevent a run, or even shouting loudly to distract them could result in the offending batsman being given out obstructing the field. See [Law 37: Obstructing The Field](#).

Timed Out

If a batsman does not arrive at the crease three minutes after the fall of the previous wicket then he may be timed out on appeal. Since this situation tends to arise during overs where four wickets have gone down in the space of five balls and the team kit is hastily being recycled, the fielding team generally take pity and have a sit down instead. See [Law 31: Timed Out](#).