

ECB Guidance on Ground, Weather and Light

Guidance for Leagues, Clubs, Captains and Players

ECB Guidance Note

Get the Game On is an ECB campaign designed to boost participation. Cricket needs everyone – players, captains, coaches, umpires, groundsmen and volunteers – to take an active role in the campaign and play their part in ensuring that as many games as possible are completed each season where it is safe to do so.

Introduction

The ECB Association of Cricket Officials (ECB ACO) has recently published guidance to all its members on ground, weather and light in the recreational game. The aim of the guidance is to assist umpires to decide, under the MCC Laws of Cricket, if play should be allowed to start, continue or resume, solely as a consequence of weather or ground-related conditions. The full guidance issued to umpires can be found at: <http://www.ecb.co.uk/ecb/ecb-associationof-cricket-officials/resources> There will be instances where playing conditions are dangerous or unreasonable, meaning that it will not be possible to either commence or complete a game despite everyone's best efforts to get the game played. It is important to remember that, while its aim is to ensure as many games as possible are completed each season, the Get the Game On campaign does not in any way override the fundamental Laws of Cricket, under which umpires alone must decide whether conditions are dangerous or unreasonable; this is in the overriding interests of player safety.

Purpose of the Guidance

The purpose of this guidance is to inform leagues, clubs, captains, players and officials about how issues of ground, weather and light are treated by umpires. In circumstances where clubs are playing a fixture without ECB ACO umpires, then the guidance should be considered to inform decisions as to whether it is safe to play. It may be that where a fixture is being played without ECB ACO umpires, Captains should jointly operate under the guidance with support and co-operation from other players as necessary / desirable.

For further tips and scenarios on dealing with ground, weather and light in games with no ECB ACO umpires visit the Get the Game On Captains Club at www.getthegameon.co.uk

The Guidance

Under the Laws of Cricket, it is for the umpires to decide whether conditions of ground, weather or light or exceptional circumstances mean it would be dangerous or unreasonable for play to take place.

1. Umpires owe a duty of care to cricketers, part of which includes not allowing play to take place if they conclude that it would be dangerous or unreasonable for play to take place. This duty cannot be passed on to others, for example by club officials and/or players saying that they will accept the risk of playing in spite of the umpires' views. (If clubs/cricketers wish to play, in spite of umpires concluding it is dangerous, umpires should tell them that they will not umpire the game.)
2. Further, play should not start, resume or continue unless BOTH umpires agree that conditions are neither dangerous nor unreasonable. In cases where there is only one qualified umpire at a game, the qualified umpire should make the decision (but may listen to the reasonable opinion of others in doing so). In all cases, when there is any doubt as to the safety of the playing conditions, those responsible for the decision should err on the side of caution and not allow play.
3. While it is a matter of judgement for umpires, whose judgement should be respected at all times, umpires should not regard conditions as either dangerous or unreasonable simply because they are not ideal. The following points are generally applicable:
 - a. The fact that the grass and ball are wet and slippery does not of itself warrant ground conditions being regarded as unreasonable or dangerous. Similarly, under the Laws of Cricket, there is no prohibition of play simply because it is raining (provided it is not dangerous or unreasonable).
 - b. However, if a bowler is deprived of a reasonable foothold, the fielders of the power of free movement, or the batsman of the ability to play their strokes or run between wickets, then it may be so wet and slippery that it would be unreasonable for play to take place.
 - c. If part of the playing area poses the risks above, then much of the time the decision will apply with equal validity to the rest of the playing area.
 - d. The occasional unusual bounce does not mean that a pitch should be seen as dangerous.
4. Inspections of the playing area should be conducted no faster than reasonable walking pace in order to identify potential hazards. Prior to play, or the resumption of play, the entire playing area should be inspected, including the area immediately beyond the boundary over which fielders may pass during play.
5. When considering whether to come off or whether play should start or resume, umpires must not take into account the state of the game (e.g. the score).

6. When there is a suspension in play, it is the responsibility of the umpires to monitor conditions and make inspections as often as appropriate, unaccompanied by the players or officials.
7. If one team refuses to play, the umpires shall award the game to their opponents.

Insurance

No matter what precautions are taken in relation to player safety, injuries can and will happen (in cricket as in any other sport). The ECB would therefore encourage all participants to consider their insurance position.