Northern Metropolitan Cricket Association Incorporated

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Umpires and Captains Handbook

2025-2026

PREAMBLE - SPIRIT OF CRICKET

Cricket is a game that owes much of its unique appeal to the fact that it should be played not only within its Laws but also within the Spirit of the Game. Any action which is seen to abuse this spirit causes injury to the game itself. The major responsibility for ensuring the spirit of fair play rests with the captains.

1. **There are two Laws which place responsibility for the team's conduct firmly on the captain.**

   Responsibility of captains:

   The captains are responsible at all times for ensuring that play is conducted within the Spirit of the Game as well as within the Laws.

   Player's conduct:

   In the event of a player failing to comply with instructions by an umpire, or criticising by word or action the decision of an umpire, or showing dissent, or generally behaving in a manner which might bring the game into disrepute, the umpire concerned shall in the first place report the matter to the other umpire and to the player's captain, and instruct the latter to take action.

2. **Fair and unfair play:**

   According to the Laws the umpires are the sole judges of fair and unfair play.
   The umpires may intervene at any time and it is the responsibility of the captain to take action where required.

3. **The umpires are authorised to intervene in cases of:**

   Time wasting
   Damaging the pitch
   Dangerous or unfair bowling
   Tampering with the ball
   Any other action that they consider to be unfair

4. **The Spirit of the Game involves RESPECT for:**

   Your opponents
   Your own captain
   The roles of the umpires
   The game's traditional values

5. **It is against the Spirit of the Game:**

   To dispute an umpire's decision by word, action or gesture
   To direct abusive language towards an opponent or umpire
   To indulge in cheating or any sharp practice, for instance:

   (a) To appeal knowing that the batsman is not out
   (b) To advance towards an umpire in an aggressive manner when appealing
   (c) To seek to distract an opponent either verbally or by harassment with persistent clapping or unnecessary noise under the guise of enthusiasm and motivation of one's own side

6. **Violence:**

   There is no place for any act of violence on the field of play.

7. **Players:**
   Captains and umpires together set the tone for the conduct of a cricket match. Every player is expected to make an important contribution towards this.

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MAJOR CONTACTS

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GENERAL MANAGER – NEIL RILEY – 0448 513 689

UMPIRES AND CAPTAINS HANDBOOK 2025 – 2026

This handbook is only a guideline to assist Captains and Umpires to get the game of Cricket played within the spirit of Cricket.

It should be also read in conjunction with the Players By-laws on the NMCA and the official Laws of Cricket (2017 code).

Match Rules are fairly robust and straightforward.

Grade Competition:-

SECTION 1

Day Matches:-

Jika Shield start at 12.30pm and each team is scheduled 40 overs.
Quick Shield, Kelly Shield, start at 12.30pm and each team is scheduled 35 overs.

"B" Grade – "C" Grade start at 12.30pm and each team is scheduled 35 overs.

Designated One Day Competition:-

Play starts at 12.30pm and each team is scheduled 35 overs.

The Handbook is designed as a quick reference for issues that only sometimes arise. These include:-

SECTION 1

1. Fitness of Ground for Play.
2. Lost Time.
3. Slow Over Rates.

SECTION 2

The Handbook also includes current NMCA policies that Captains and Umpires need to know and understand. These are:-

4. Conventions for Grass Roots Cricket – Unfair Play.
5. Correctness of Scores.
6. Player Management – What's expected of Captains, Players and Umpires?
7. Players Standing as Square Leg Umpires.
8. Safe Play in Heat and Extreme Heat.
9. Suspect Bowling Actions.
10. The Toss.

SECTION 1

1. FITNESS OF GROUND FOR PLAY: -

Application of Law 8 & 9

In Adverse conditions – the fitness of the ground, weather or light rests with the umpires alone. In assessing conditions the match context is not a consideration.

Is the ground suitable, unsuitable or dangerous?

(A) Suitable: - Advise Captains when play will start or recommence, giving at least 10 minutes notice. Advise home team of any requirements e.g. sawdust, sweeping pitch.

(B) Unsuitable: - Suspend play, or not allow play to commence, or recommence. Establish and communicate time for next inspection.

(C) Dangerous: - If further play is unlikely, do both captains agree to abandon play for the day?

(i) No. Establish and communicate time for next inspection. If either Captain does not wish to abandon play then umpires and the opposition have an obligation to remain at the ground where any further play is possible. Advise home team of any preparation requirements.

(ii) Yes. Abandon play for the day. Note time on match report.

Recommencement of play:-

Ground or pitch inspections are to be carried out by umpires, as often as appropriate, unaccompanied by players or officials. If the umpires decide to recommence play then they must advise Captains when play will recommence, giving at least 10 minutes notice. Advise the home team of any preparation requirements.

If adverse conditions still exist, then the assessment process recommences.

If a team refuses to take the field, after being advised that play will recommence then this is a decision to forfeit the match.

Field Technique *– do not allow any club members to threaten action on umpires in these scenarios. E.g. If a player threatens to take legal or other action against an umpire for commencing or resuming play (in the event he is injured) then the matter should be reported for the first offence, the charge is likely to be "threatening an umpire- Level 1". Inform the other Umpire (if applicable) and the Captain of the team of the offender. Repeated action of this kind by the player will mean that a second report will be required, and this will be an upgrade of the original report. At this point the Captain will also be reported for not controlling his players.*

2. LOST TIME – ONE DAY MATCH:

Application of Rule 3.15 – One Day Match Rules:-

Late Start (up to 3.00pm):- Overs for both teams reduced as per ready reckoner.

Interruption to side batting first:- Overs for both teams reduced as per ready reckoner. If the total time lost exceeds 120 mins compulsory closure on completion of 25 overs.

Interruption to side batting second:- If play interrupted for more than 30 minutes and entitled overs have not been bowled then play ceases at the completion of the over in progress at 6.00pm.

To achieve a result in an interrupted match the side batting second shall be entitled to bat for the same number of allotted overs as the side batting first.

Play is abandoned and the match is declared a draw if -

(i) a match has not started by 2.30pm,
(ii) 25 Overs have not been bowled to the team batting first by 4.00pm, or
(iii) play interrupted to the team batting second (for more than 30 minutes) and entitled overs have not been bowled at the completion of the over in progress at 6.00pm.

Example A — Match gets underway at 2.00pm.
27 overs allotted to each team.

Example B — Match gets underway at 2.00pm and 27 overs allotted to each team. Further interruptions to play and team batting first has received 25 overs at 4.00pm.
Compulsory closure for team batting first. Team batting second is allotted 25 overs.

Example C — Match gets underway at 2.00pm and 27 overs allotted to each team. Further interruptions to play and team batting first has received 24 overs at 4.00pm.
Play abandoned, match drawn.

Example D — Match gets underway at 2.00pm and 27 overs allotted to each team. Further interruptions to play and team batting first has received 25 overs at 4.00pm. Team batting second allotted 25 overs. After a further 20 min delay, team batting second has received 23 overs at 6.00pm.
Play continues until 25 overs have been bowled.

				Overs To Be Bowled	
Late Start	or	Time lost during 1st innings		40 over match	35 over match
12.36 pm		0 Mins -	6 Mins	40	35
12.43 pm		7 Mins -	13 Mins	39	34
12.50 pm		14 Mins -	20 Mins	38	33
12.57 pm		21 Mins -	27 Mins	37	32
1.04 pm		28 Mins -	34 Mins	36	31
1.11 pm		35 Mins -	41 Mins	35	30
1.18 pm		42 Mins -	48 Mins	34	29
1.25 pm		49 Mins -	55 Mins	33	28
1.32 pm		56 Mins -	62 Mins	32	27
1.39 pm		63 Mins -	69 Mins	31	26
1.46 pm		70 Mins -	76 Mins	30	25
1.53 pm		77 Mins -	83 Mins	29	24
2.00 pm		84 Mins -	90 Mins	28	23
2.07 m		91 Mins -	97 Mins	27	22
2.14pm		98 Mins -	104 Mins	26	21
2.21 pm		105 Mins -	111 Mins	25	20

3. SLOW OVER RATES - APPLICATION OF RULE 3.16.3:-

Note: In any days play – interrupted or otherwise, the quota must be bowled if the conditions permit. When the quota is bowled, umpires need to check the time taken, then, factoring into account conditions, extra drinks breaks, injuries, lost balls etc. report overs not bowled by the scheduled time.

Example A No interruptions or adverse conditions. One team bowling all day. At 5.30pm 78 overs have been bowled.
If no mitigating circumstances – umpire to report a two over penalty.

Field Technique – Umpires to note overs bowled at breaks and the scheduled finish time in each case. Umpires to be generally aware of the over rate and to advise captains if requested.

Time remaining in minutes		*Time remaining in minutes*		*Time remaining in minutes*		*Time remaining in minutes*	
30 to 33	*9*	*93 to 96*	*27*	*156 to 159*	*45*	*219 to 222*	*63*
34 to 36	*10*	*97 to 99*	*28*	*160 to 162*	*46*	*223 to 225*	*64*
37 to 40	*11*	*100 to 103*	*29*	*163 to 166*	*47*	*226 to 229*	*65*
41 to 43	*12*	*104 to 106*	*30*	*167 to 169*	*48*	*230 to 232*	*66*
44 to 47	*13*	*107 to 110*	*31*	*170 to 173*	*49*	*233 to 236*	*67*
48 to 50	*14*	*111 to 113*	*32*	*174 to 176*	*50*	*237 to 239*	*68*
51 to 54	*15*	*114 to 117*	*33*	*177 to 180*	*51*	*240 to 243*	*69*
55 to 57	*16*	*118 to 120*	*34*	*181 to 183*	*52*	*244 to 246*	*70*
58 to 61	*17*	*121 to 124*	*35*	*184 to 187*	*53*	*247 to 250*	*71*
62 to 64	*18*	*125 to 127*	*36*	*188 to 190*	*54*	*251 to 253*	*72*
65 to 68	*19*	*128 to 131*	*37*	*191 to 194*	*55*	*254 to 257*	*73*
69 to 71	*20*	*132 to 134*	*38*	*195 to 197*	*56*	*258 to 260*	*74*
72 to 75	*21*	*135 to 138*	*39*	*198 to 201*	*57*	*261 to 264*	*75*
76 to 78	*22*	*139 to 141*	*40*	*202 to 204*	*58*	*265 to 267*	*76*
79 to 82	*23*	*142 to 145*	*41*	*205 to 208*	*59*	*268 to 271*	*77*
83 to 85	*24*	*146 to 148*	*42*	*209 to 211*	*60*	*272 to 274*	*78*
86 to 89	*25*	*149 to 152*	*43*	*212 to 215*	*61*	*275 to 278*	*79*
90 to 92	*26*	*153 to 155*	*44*	*216 to 218*	*62*	*279 to 281*	*80*

SECTION 2

4. CONVENTIONS FOR COMMUNITY CRICKET:-

Unfair Play (Law 41) The Umpires shall be the sole judges of fair or unfair play.

There are many examples of actions, not covered in the Laws which may constitute "unfair play".

Here are a few decisions that will come up occasionally.

Question:- A bowler turns quickly and bowls unexpectedly to a batsman. The batsman is bowled. What decision should the umpire make?

Answer:-The key is unexpectedly. The batsman should be given the benefit of any doubt. In some cases the umpire may consider this a breach and take action under Law 20.4.2.5. He shall call dead ball. If an umpire is in any doubt about the preparedness of a batsman then the Captain of the fielding team should be warned.

Question:- Ball is deflected off the batters pads. Clearly no run. Batter wanders out of his crease – keeper throws down stumps and appeals?

Answer:- Umpires should confer as they both have a decision to make. The bowling end umpire decides if the ball is in play. The square leg makes the decision on the stumping. Just because the batsman thinks the ball is dead- it doesn't mean it is dead. Often a batter will get a nod off a fielder if he isn't sure and he needs to get out of his crease or handle the ball.

Field Technique – in difficult and contentious decisions, or where doubt exists, it is important that the umpires confer and then make a considered decision. Law 20.1.2. (This includes volunteer umpires standing at square leg.)

5. CORRECTNESS OF SCORES:-

Scorers must confer at the end of each over and enter the scores in the progressive column in the scorebook. In effect, the scorers are in agreement that that score is the actual score. If the scores subsequently do not add up, then the official score is the score in the progressive column.

Field Technique. The scorers agreement of the runs scored, wickets fallen and overs bowled is sufficient consultation to satisfy Law 3.2. The umpires are not required to audit the scorebook. Umpires should note the scores at tea and stumps and sign the scorebook at these intervals.

6. PLAYER MANAGEMENT POLICY:-

There is widespread discussion and focus on unsporting behaviour in cricket. Clubs and the UA are required to advertise the policy at club level to captains and players.

Ignorance of this policy will not be accepted as an excuse from Captains, Players or Umpires.

1. Low Tolerance policy on "sledging" - Law 41.4 – 41.5:-
   Any comments or actions directed to, or about a player, which is designed to distract him or erode his confidence.

   If left unchecked this behaviour almost always escalates tension in a cricket match which inevitably leads to further on field management problems for captains and umpires.

   Captains can expect a warning from the Umpire if comments or actions fall within the broad definition.

2. Zero Tolerance on Abusive or Offensive Language - Law 42.1:-
   Umpires need to use discretion as in some cases personal abuse by players to other players may be considered serious enough to report (without warning).

   Any abusive language to or about an umpire should be reported (without warning).

3. Zero Tolerance on "Send Offs" – Law 42.1:-
   Provocation of an outgoing batsman by a member/s of the fielding team.

   All Send Offs should result in a Report.

4. Zero Tolerance on the questioning of decisions after appeal – Law 42.1:- .

   In the course of the match the umpire is not under any obligation to explain a decision. He either raises his finger or says "Not Out".

Umpires & Captains Field Technique:-

1. Umpires will remind Captains of their obligations at the Toss in each match.
2. Captains are urged to take action against players breaching behaviour codes. Don't wait for the Umpire – the Laws of Cricket place the responsibility for the team's conduct firmly on the Captain.
3. When behaviour becomes unacceptable, the umpire concerned shall in the first place report the matter to the other umpire and to the player's captain, and instruct the latter to take action.
4. In most case a warning will be sufficient, but if necessary Umpires will follow up unheeded warnings with Reports.
5. Umpires must carefully note incidents, including names and times and the role of the Captain.
6. Umpires will report cases of send offs, personal abuse, vilification, or abusive language to or about an umpire. If in doubt – report and the Match Review Panel will decide if a penalty is appropriate.
7. The onus is on Captains to seek clarification of any issue, including the "all clear". Under the Laws of Cricket Umpires are required to notify clubs of reports, however, if the Umpire is "one out" and doesn't feel comfortable notifying the Club, then he must contact the NMCA General Manager who will inform the Club.

Reporting Procedures – Umpires:-

1. appeals.
2. Umpires are required to report the facts. The MRP will decide the level of penalty.
3. Where two umpires are standing and a reportable incident takes place, the umpire must notify the other umpire and the captain.
4. The report is then made by BOTH umpires.
5. Umpires are required to carefully note details of player reports which will be required at consequent reviews, investigations, hearing Umpires are under no obligation to inform players that they have been reported. However, the Umpires are required under the Laws of Cricket to inform the Club. If the Umpire is "one out" and doesn't feel comfortable notifying the Club, then he must contact the NMCA General Manager who will inform the Club.
6. The only report form is the on-line report. Any questions about a report are to be directed to the General Manager.

Reporting Procedures – Captains:-

Captains, as part of their normal post-match assessment will be asked to comment on the Umpire's performance in the context of this policy.

The Match Review Panel (MRP):-

1. The Match Review Panel (appointed by the Board) will review reports and decide on appropriate review procedures and penalties. Umpires, captains and players may be asked questions by phone, email or SMS as part of the review procedure.
   The MRP will contact clubs regarding charges, advocacy reports, penalties and the right of appeal.
2. Umpires and players must make themselves available for any hearings or appeals that may be convened.

   The full Rules as they apply to misconduct cases are available to read or download on the NMCA website.

7. PLAYERS STANDING AS SQUARE LEG UMPIRES:-

Captains need to ensure that the person they send out is up to the task.

Appointed umpires may overrule unappointed umpires in stumpings and runouts in cases where they have a clear view and the decision is clearing incorrect.

If an appointed umpire overrules another umpire then he shall ask the Captain of the batting side for a replacement and report the matter to the Administration.

Club Square Leg Umpires must be suitable dressed with runners and socks, white pants, shorts (non-sports styles) are permisable, and a coloured top (Hi-Vis top).

Absolutely no mobile phone allowed on the ground.

8. SAFE PLAY IN HEAT AND EXTREME HEAT:-

VicHealth Sunsmart Policy:-

If the forecast temperature is over 30 degrees drinks breaks must be taken a minimum of every 40 minutes. This will be monitored by the General Manager.

Extreme Heat:-

If there is no abandonment of play and the weather reaches 38 degrees at the Viewbank weather station after the commencement of play, the General Manager shall notify all Clubs that play shall cease immediately for a period of 20 minutes.

If this stoppage is within 20 minutes of the scheduled tea break, then the tea break shall be taken.

The General Manager, shall monitor the weather and take into consideration of any forecast conditions that could affect the recommencement of play, (cool change, cloud coverage, humidity levels, wind strength and direction etc.

If, after the 20 minute break and in the General Manager's opinion, the weather conditions are not likely to abate, then he shall contact all Clubs to inform them that play will be abandoned for the remainder of the day.

If, after the 20 minute break and in the General Manager opinion, the weather conditions could change to allow play, then he shall contact all Clubs to inform them that play can recommence.

If play is allowed to recommence, actions which may assist in safe play include;

1. Extra drink breaks (i.e. every 40 minutes and as needed)
2. An extension to the tea break of up to ten (10) minutes, and
3. An extension to the change of innings breaks of up to five (5) minutes.

Umpires are advised to extend the scheduled time of completion to allow for these extra breaks.

9. SUSPECT BOWLING ACTIONS:-

Lawmakers have made life difficult for Umpires and Administrators in the governance of this emotive subject.

Since the revamp of the Laws in 2000 Umpires can no longer call players with "suspect" actions.

These cases are now "mentioned" in umpire's reports and referred to the Administration for action.

The VMCU – our peak body, has a policy that governs our response. The key elements are:-

- Discretion
- Evaluation
- Local Action
- Remedial Work

DO – Umpires or Captains. Discreetly report problems to the General Manager, Operations Manager or the Umpire Manager.

DO – Clubs. Take responsibility for your player. If there is a problem don't pass it on to umpires and administrators. Seek remedial action with a qualified coach. The NMCA and the VMCU will provide assistance with players who wish to improve their action.

DON"T – anyone. Make obvious and offensive remarks from the field or boundary e.g. calling "no-ball" and making references to baseball. This sort of action is provocative and will be reported as a breach of codes of behaviour.

Occasionally, cases are reported where a bowler bowls a delivery (e.g. a quicker ball) with an entirely different action to his stock delivery.

An appointed umpire has the right to call a player for throwing if he is certain that the delivery is illegal.

10. THE TOSS:- (Laws of Cricket 13.4 (2017 Code))

Both Captains, or a player deputising for the Captain/s shall met with at least one official Umpire if appointed and toss the coin. The toss shall be taken not earlier than 30 minutes, nor later than 15 minutes prior to the scheduled or any rescheduled time for the start of play.