

ACS STATISTICS LOGISTICS SUB-GROUP

In October 2020 the Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians (ACS) created a Statistics Logistics sub-group containing, as follows, representatives of the ACS committee, members of the Association plus members of the scoring and umpiring community in both the professional and recreational game:

Andrew Hignell (Chair); Philip Bailey; Sue Drinkwater; Ric Finlay; David Kendix; Douglas Miller; Harriet Monkhouse; Chris O'Brien and Rajiv Radhakrishnan.

The remit of this sub-group has been to discuss and advise the ACS General Committee on such matters relating to the recording or calculation of cricket statistics, besides assisting in the preparation and issue of formal guidance or advice to statisticians at all levels of the game, plus informing others (e.g. trainee umpires/scorers) and answering any subsequent enquiries which may arise.

Discussions have subsequently taken place, via email and in a virtual way via ZOOM, on an initial batch of questions – as outlined below – with the sub-group reaching a series of answers as well as producing a short narrative explaining their stance and how their decision was agreed upon. In reaching this viewpoint, the sub-group have drawn on playing conditions and match regulations, including those produced by the ICC, ECB and other governing bodies, as well as considering statisticians' preferences and the way that scoring software has been set up for use in the modern game.

The sub-group's responsibilities have not only been to look at what does happen, but what should happen – allowing the ACS to recommend and advise that changes to current practice could potentially be made, either to make the current practice more sensible, or simply to ensure consistency in its operation and application.

Whilst focusing on the contemporary game, the sub-group have been very mindful that the application of their advice to matches in the past will be difficult, particularly in the absence of full match details and ball-by-ball data. Therefore, it is not intended to over-rule any past decisions, especially regarding the status of a game, its result or the individual batting scores, bowling figures or team totals.

Other questions have been raised and on-going discussions are taking place, with further answers to follow. If you have any questions you would like the sub-group to consider, please send an email to secretary@acscricket.com

1 When should a match be regarded as beginning?

When the toss takes place and the winning captain decides whether to bat or bowl.

Historically, a match was regarded as starting when the umpire called 'play' and signals to the scorers. This has been subsequently amended, with an ICC ruling in the early 2000s relating to One-Day Internationals where no play takes place after a toss had been made. They decided that this should count as an appearance, although their decision was not retrospective so examples such as the Third Test of the Ashes series in 1970/71 when England won the toss yet there was no play whatsoever, remains as an abandoned match and does not count as an appearance. In contrast, the ODI at Southampton in 2004 which was rained off after the West Indies won the toss does count as an appearance because it was after the ICC's ruling.

According to the Current Laws (A.1.6 in Appendix A) , “During the match is any time after the toss until the conclusion of the match, whether play is in progress or not.” Therefore, for the modern-day games, a match has officially started once the toss has been made, and the composition of each team has been swapped by the two captains, a match has officially started. If it is subsequently rained off without a ball having been bowled, it still counts as an ‘appearance’ for the 22 players involved. The result in this instance, would either be ‘Match Drawn’ or ‘No result’ (as in a List A or T20 game). If no toss takes place, and no teams are exchanged, the match is not regarded as an appearance, with the result being ‘Match Abandoned’.

The sub-group accepts that when dealing with rained-off games in the past, it is difficult sometimes to track down in either primary sources (scorebooks) or secondary sources (newspapers) whether or not a toss took place before the game was called off, or whether teams had been agreed. However, the sub-group recommend that no retrospective changes are made to the records and that the example, as cited above from the 1970/71 series, remains as an abandoned match, even though a toss took place.

2 When does play start?

When the first scorebook entry takes place following the call of ‘play’ by the umpire.

This is also addressed by Law 14.3 which says play starts as soon as, after the call of Play, the first over has started. Law 17.2 also says the first over starts when the bowler starts his or her run up or, if there is no run up, starts his or her action for the first delivery of that over. This is the same as the ball being in play, as explained in Law 20.5.

The call of ‘Play’ by the umpire is therefore a command to start, not necessarily implying that play has started. However, for statistical purposes, it arguably makes more sense to regard the beginning of the innings as when there is an entry in the scorebook, generally when the first ball is delivered (which may be a no ball or a wide). This avoids the possibility of two batters having an innings of 0* without having faced a ball if injuries and/or rain prevent both the first and subsequent balls being bowled.

It is also important to stress that when scoring the game the batter facing the first ball is recorded as no. 1 in the batting order, with their partner no. 2.

3 When should a team's innings begin?

In terms of timings, each of the teams’ innings start upon the call of ‘Play’ by the presiding umpire at the start of the innings following his/her signal to the scorers.

This means that if, as in the Third Test between England and Pakistan in August 2020, the two batters enter the playing area (by crossing over the boundary line or rope) in the expectation of starting the innings, but play is then called off for the day without an umpire calling ‘Play’, the team is permitted to start its innings on the following day(s) with different opening batter if it so wishes.

The above is currently covered by Law 25.2

4 When should a batsman's innings begin?

For the opening batters, their innings begin when the umpire calls 'Play' and signals to the scorers.

In terms of subsequent batters, their innings start from the moment they cross the boundary into the playing area. If they cross the boundary line (or rope) and walk onto the field of play, but do not face a ball because play is subsequently called off, they recorded as being 'not out 0'.

The above is covered in Law 25.2

There are anomalies however to this ruling as a night watchman sent in to bat, entering the field of play, but never reaching the crease before the cessation of play would probably not be his captain's choice to resume his innings next day. But under Law 25.2, they would have to do so. Moreover, in a limited overs match that is shortened, either before it gets under way or at a later stage, a captain might prefer to have at the crease a different style of batter, and one better able to take best advantage of a reduced number of overs. The captain could change the opening pair but not a later batter who had stepped onto the field.

5 Should wides and/or no balls count as balls faced by a batter, or as balls delivered by a bowler rather than just the total number of legitimate deliveries?

No balls count as deliveries faced by a batter (because runs can – in theory - be scored by the batter), but not wides (because runs cannot be scored by the batter).

It is standard practice for modern scorers to note the number of instances when no balls and wides are delivered by a bowler so a record could be produced of the number of legitimate balls plus no balls for each bowler in an innings

In making the distinction above between no balls and wides, we should not forget that there are some instances when a batter cannot score runs off a no ball. For instance, if the ball comes to rest in front of the striker's wicket.

Again, there is an anomaly in that a bowler could have the absurd-looking bowling figures of, for instance, 0 – 0 – 2 - 1 for a no ball followed next delivery by the batter being stumped off a wide.

6 Should wides and / or no balls count in the total number of balls bowled in an innings, rather than just the total number of legitimate deliveries?

No - only legitimate deliveries should be counted in the innings summary/record. The number of wides and no balls is supplementary information.

As far as List A and T20 games are concerned, the DLS software and algorithm is based on the number of legitimate balls which were due to be bowled – no forecasting tool can predict how many invalid balls might have been delivered.

Only denoting legal deliveries also helps to provide a context to, and a better understanding of, the result – for instance, if team A scored 260 in 50 overs and Team B 261 for seven in 49.4 overs, it has clearly been a tight match won with only two balls to spare. To be told that Team A made 260 in 307 balls and Team B 261 for seven in 312 balls muddies the waters and it is impossible on this basis alone to know how many balls were in hand when victory was achieved. Knowing how many balls were in hand when the result was achieved is more meaningful than knowing the total number of deliveries bowled.

7 Should wides and / or no balls count in the total number of balls bowled in career figures rather than just the total number of legitimate deliveries?

A career tally currently only includes legal deliveries and does not include wides or no balls.

Given the improvements in the recording of the game and the introduction of scoring software, it is now possible to include wides and no balls in career figures and give a figure of total balls bowled in a career rather than just overs.

The main use of this data i.e. number of balls bowled, is to determine the economy rate, and this is best done using valid balls bowled (see question 8).

Moving forward, statisticians should be encouraged to also record the number of no balls and wides bowled by each bowler. In addition to enabling a calculation of total deliveries, this gives the facility to calculate e.g. no balls and wides bowled by a bowler per 100 valid balls bowled, although it would take time for this to feed through to career figures in the absence of past data.

8 Should wides count as a delivery in a partnership or team milestone?

Wides should be included as a delivery faced when dealing with a partnership or team milestone. The rationale is that they are adding onto the team total, rather than onto the batter's individual score.

9 Should wides and no balls be taken into account when calculating a batter's strike rate?

A strike rate is a statistical tool to show how many runs a batter has scored during an innings relative to the number of balls faced. If a wide is a ball from which a batter was not able to score runs, it should not therefore be included. However, no balls should be included.

The computer software currently records the number of legitimate balls plus no balls a batsman faces during an innings, but historically, this level of detail has never been recorded in traditional scorebooks.

There is a modern anomaly in that according to some match regulations, no balls are called for height so, therefore, are deliveries – like wides - which a batsman could not hit and score runs

from. However, it is not practicable at the present time to refine the computer scoring software to make allowance for these.

10 Which fielder should be attributed with a catch when multiple fielders are involved in a dismissal?

The fielder who completes the catch (i.e. holds onto the ball when the decision is upheld) is the one attributed with the catch.

If the ball has cannoned off another fielder or, in the case of a boundary catch, two – or more – fielders are involved, it is good practice (but not mandatory) for scorers to record the names of the others involved as a note in a scorebook including the order in which the catch was made e.g. from Bloggs at first slip to Smith at second slip. In contrast, on the scoring software, the Primary Fielder is the one completing the catch and the one to which it is accredited. The secondary fielder will be the one who “assisted”, “parried”, or “fumbled”.

There will also be an element of subjectivity by the scorer because some may think that, for example, a wicket-keeper who fumbles a ball that goes to the slip fielder does not deserve any credit in the dismissal.

Again, this will be difficult/impossible to deal with historic data, but could be implemented for the future given the development of the scoring software.

11 Should catches/dismissals as a substitute fielder count in career records?

In general, a catch made by a substitute fielder is not included because they are not one of the nominated players taking part in the game.

However, if one of the nominated team acts as a replacement wicket-keeper, the catches and stumpings they make do count in their career tally. It is good practice for the scorer to make a note of the change in wicket-keeper (plus the team total and number of overs bowled) as a note in a scorebook or the scoring software.

Any catches (or stumpings) which the substitute has taken prior to being officially sanctioned as a full replacement do not count.

Catches and dismissals made by a substitute fielder are included in career records if they are a full replacement – as opposed to a temporary fielder - because of injury (concussion) or illness (COVID-19). The game concerned also counts as an appearance in their career statistics.

12 Which fielder should be attributed with a Run Out when multiple fielders are involved in a dismissal?

The fielder breaking the wicket when the appeal is upheld is the one attributed to have completed the run out, even if they have not initiated the actions or confusion amongst the batter's calling leading to the run out or made an outstanding piece of fielding resulting in the dismissal.

If multiple fielders are involved, they should be recorded in the notes, or in the scorebook, in the order in which the run out was made e.g. from the fielder throwing the ball in, for example, at cover to the bowler. If this follows a misfield or dropped catch by another fielder, they should not be recorded.

For modern games, the scoring software allows for more than one name to be entered, but the one breaking the wicket is the primary fielder, and the others involved being the secondary fielder.

There may be an element of subjectivity exercised by a scorer to credit a fielder who made a fine stop or arrow-like throw over the top of the stumps with the wicket-keeper (or bowler / secondary fielder) not playing a major part in the dismissal.

13 When adding up part overs, should you round up in overs or keep it split out with part overs when completing the bowling analysis summary? Is it better to use (legitimate) balls bowled?

Overs are always shown rounded up i.e. in a match where there are six balls in an over, 0.4 plus 0.3 is 1.1 not 0.7.

In earlier times, when a bowler was unable to complete an over (e.g. through injury), that over was not completed by another bowler, but the bowling immediately reverted to the other end. The uncompleted over was treated as a full over in the bowling analysis, so a bowler bowling 2 overs and 3 balls before retiring would be credited with 3 overs – which is later translated into 18 deliveries even though he actually bowled only 15.

Many of these mistakes have been corrected but errors still remain in the statistics, including the number of maidens, because if no runs were scored from these deliveries, a maiden would be credited to the bowler.

14 Should the number of dot balls bowled, rather than maiden overs, be used for bowling analyses in T20 matches and The Hundred?

Broadcasters and websites are increasingly using the number of dot balls in their graphics for short form cricket, whilst analysts calculate dot ball percentages when assessing a bowler's performance. It is likely that dot balls, rather than maiden overs, will be created by the scoring software for The Hundred. We therefore recommend the use of dot balls rather than maidens when creating career records in The Hundred.

However, as statisticians, the number of maidens bowled in T20 has a special value given their rarity and they deserve recording, in the same way as the number of wides and no balls.

15 If by miscounting an umpire ends an over after only 5 balls have been delivered, or allows it to continue for a seventh delivery, should these 'missing' or 'extra' balls be taken into account in presenting and calculating the bowler's innings or career statistics?

A scorer should record only what they see rather than ignoring or creating a delivery.

Whilst the number of overs will not be affected, the number of deliveries from the bowler concerned may be one short, or one too many, if an umpiring error has taken place. However, it should be treated as one over, or six balls bowled (not five or seven) as far as career statistics are concerned.

This assumption about six balls having been bowled is wrong if an umpire has miscounted. However, especially in the professional game, such errors are now rare, and it is not worthwhile to correct for this. However, it is good practice by the scorer to make a footnote in the scorebook to highlight the fact that the over had either one too many or one too few deliveries, but it is not necessary to add the name of the official concerned!

The anomaly though is that a bowler, in theory, could take 7 wickets from 6 balls and problems will occur if a wicket falls from the 7th delivery. However, this is such a rare occurrence, especially in professional cricket with walkie-talkies communication with the umpires.

In addition, there is an inconsistency with the number of balls faced by the batter, which would be 5 if they faced all balls in an erroneous 5-ball over.

16 If a batter retires hurt, how is their innings treated in the averages?

According to the Laws, there is no such thing as 'retired hurt'. Either a batsman is 'retired out' or 'retired not out'. This differentiation is made by the umpires and communicated to the scorers at the time of their departure from the middle, allowing the correct entry to be made in the scorebook, or in the scoring software. When calculating averages, 'Retired out' is treated as a completed innings whilst 'Retired Not Out' is treated as a not out innings.

17 How are 'illegal' balls treated by scorers and do they count, or not, as balls faced?

Illegal balls are those, not counting in the over, other than a Wide or No Ball and usually happens because of penalty runs being awarded under the following circumstances:

- Law 24.4 - Fielder returning without permission and in contact with the ball.
- Law 28.2 - Illegal fielding.
- Law 41.4 - Deliberate attempt to distract striker preparing to or receiving a delivery.
- Law 41.5 - Deliberate distraction, deception, or obstruction of either batsman.
- Law 41.14 - Batsmen stealing a run during bowler's run up.

It can also happen if a bowler attempts to run out a batsman ('Mankad')

The sub-group has been asked whether, or not, illegal balls count for:

- Batsman's total balls
- Batsman's dot/other balls
- Partnership total balls
- Partnership individual batsman's balls
- Scorecard/scorebook total innings balls

The transgression of Law 41.14 awards penalty runs to the fielding side and is "attached" by the scoring software to the previous delivery which has already been recorded by scorers, so it does not increase the ball count in any of the bullet points in question.

The sub-group's recommendation is that 'illegal balls' count in all the bullet points above, as long as the ball has been delivered. Therefore, if a Run Out of the non-striker backing up ('Mankad') occurs, because the ball has not been delivered, it should therefore NOT count as a delivery in all the bullet points in question.

AKH
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