

Cricket



Modern cricket is a team sport originating in England and popular mainly in areas that formerly made up the British Empire. The language of cricket is particularly idiosyncratic and tends to reflect the somewhat complicated and eccentric nature of the game itself.

The game is played between two competing teams of eleven players on each side, on a large expanse of (usually grassy) ground called a pitch. The teams are usually comprised of players with a mixture of abilities, some who specialize at batting, some at bowling, occasionally some who excel in both capacities, and one highly specialist player who acts as 'wicket-keeper'. In the center of the pitch is a length of grass, (usually 22 yards long), called 'the wicket'. At each end of the wicket are placed three sticks adjacent to each other in an upright position: these are the 'stumps'. They are separated by a gap not greater than the diameter of a cricket ball. On top of each set of stumps are placed two smaller sticks, or 'bails'. A chalk outline is drawn in front of each set of stumps called a 'crease'. Two 'umpires' referee the game.

The length of games can vary in duration of time, and number of balls bowled. One side will 'bat' first, the other side will bowl to them. Batsmen play in pairs, each equipped with a bat, one at each end of the wicket.

The object for the batting side is to score the optimal number of 'runs' (points) before the bowling side has dismissed them. The object

for the bowling side is to dismiss the batsmen as economically as possible. Once the process is complete the roles are reversed, i.e. the side, which were batting, then bowl and the bowling side then bat. This reversal may happen only the once (typically in 'one-day' or 'limited overs' cricket) or twice, as in county or international test match cricket.

Runs can be scored in a number of ways: each time that the batting pair is able to run between the wickets after a ball has been bowled (and before the stumps are or potentially can be touched with the ball) a run is scored. If the ball travels outside of the playing area, and it has touched the ground prior to leaving the playing area, 4 runs are scored. If the ball does not touch the ground on its way out, 6 runs are scored. Additionally, runs can be accrued through the failure of the bowler to correctly deliver the ball; either through an incorrect bowling action, when this is deemed a 'no-ball', or through the ball being delivered too wide for the batsman to strike it, known as a 'wide'. The number of runs accrued can be affected by where the ball ends up; a no-ball which crosses the boundary will count for 4 runs. Additionally, any balls, which are deemed foul, have to be bowled again by the same bowler before his turn or 'over' of 6 correctly delivered balls is deemed complete.

Dismissal of the batsmen can occur in a number of ways. The batsman facing the bowler can be 'bowled' out, i.e. the ball will hit the stumps without him being able to prevent it. If the batsman strikes the ball with the bat and it is caught by the bowler or one of the bowler's side who are dotted around the ground to field the ball before it hits the ground, then he is deemed to be out. A batsman can also be stumped by the specially equipped wicket-keeper, a player who stands immediately behind the batsman to retrieve balls coming through from the bowler, if the batsman steps in front of the crease leaving no part of his anatomy or the bat behind, and the wicket-keeper is able to remove the bails from the wicket with the ball. A batsman can also be out 'leg before wicket' or 'lbw': this is one of the more complex and vexatious rules and usually involves the ball striking the batsman's leg-

protectors or 'pads' and the likelihood of the onward trajectory of the ball striking the wicket has the player's anatomy not intervened.

Either player can be 'run-out' if the wicket towards which they are running during the course of play is struck with the ball prior to their reaching the safety of the crease.