

# BASIC UMPIRING PRACTICES FOR LEVEL ONE UMPIRES

A Guide for Beginners

WACA

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The Level One Umpire Program is designed to give parents, coaches of junior sides, teachers and general cricket lovers a basic introduction to officiating in community junior matches.

Anyone who is involved in community junior cricket and has not completed the Level One Umpire Program is strongly advised to contact the WACA through your Cricket Officer to arrange a session.

For more information regarding Level one Umpire Program contact:

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This document aims to value add to the program by giving some practical advice on the basic techniques required in managing a match at this level. Its purpose to give practical advice for the mum's and dad's who get called on to umpire their teams match.

Ideally, anyone who is called on to umpire should have a sound knowledge of the Laws. The WACA runs courses on the Laws of Cricket and these should be sourced from the WACA website. As well anyone with an interest in umpiring should consider joining the Western Australian Cricket Umpires Association.

As an official in a junior match one of the main outcomes is to create an environment in which participation and enjoyment are paramount. Poor sportsmanship from any person involved in the match, parents included, must not be tolerated and usually can be avoided by the officials having a good knowledge of match officiating practices and of the Laws of Cricket and playing conditions pertaining to the competition.

Safety of the participants is also critical and there may even be legal implications for not adhering to the playing conditions of the competition.

## **Chapter 1:       Getting started**

### **Duty of care**

There will almost certainly be playing conditions that attempt to ensure the safety of the participants, such as the wearing of helmets, the proximity of the fielders to the batsman and the number of overs an individual may bowl. These must be strictly enforced to avoid any legal implications. We have a duty of care to the participants that we accept as soon as we take on the role of the match official.

Prior to the start of a new season any person who may be involved in umpiring in any competition must familiarise themselves with the current Laws of Cricket and as well the important playing conditions applying to the local association competition.

Laws of Cricket (2000 Code 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition – 2008) are available for purchase through the WACA.

In some competitions there may be very important playing conditions that will over ride the Laws such as the LBW law may be modified or even may not apply.

Your local club/association will usually run ‘rules nights’ prior to the season and these should be a must for team coaches and managers.

### **Practice**

If you are likely to volunteer to be the team umpire it is a good idea to get in some practice to get the feel for being the umpire. When you attend player practice, why not stand in the umpire’s position at the bowlers end to get the feel for watching the bowler’s feet and then switching attention to the batsman. Look for the edges or the possible LBW appeals.

If you have the opportunity to watch senior accredited umpires at work note the positioning, movement and in particular the signalling that goes on between them.

See if you can observe some of the common signals that will be used. These may include

- “2 to go” in an over: when the 4<sup>th</sup> ball of the over is dead the umpires will look to each other and signal with index and middle fingers extended that there are 2 balls remaining in the over, this is a check against miscounts
- One umpire may signal to his mate for help to decide if the wicket has been broken fairly in a run out;
- Has the ball carried for the catch to the keeper;
- Did the ball go for a 4 or 6?

## **Chapter 2: Match day.**

### **Arriving at the ground**

If you are a parent who is going to umpire you will probably arrive at the ground with your child, however try to get there reasonably early to be part of the preparation of the ground. Designating the boundaries and setting up the stumps are part of the official's role.

Make sure that the stumps are set up correctly and the field is clear of any debris such as broken glass or large sharp objects. Sadly in these times sporting grounds have commonly become places for drug use at night and particular attention should be paid to the handling of implements for drug use particularly syringes.

Find who will be umpiring with you. It may be a parent from the other team who is less aware of the duties and so a discussion of relevant Laws and playing conditions is important.

Create a friendly cooperative atmosphere whilst not underplaying the competitive nature of the match. Sport is competitive but should be played in a sportsmanlike manner adhering to the traditions and spirit of the match.

Find out who will be scoring and discuss with them any relevant signals such as No Ball, Wide, four or six runs, Dead Ball etc.

### **The Toss**

One of our duties is to supervise the toss of the coin. Bring the captains together. Introduce the captains to each other and yourself as the umpire. Make sure after tossing that each captain is clear on whether they are batting or bowling.

### **What do I wear on to the field?**

At all times whilst officiating we should look like we are there to carry out the role of the official.

As a minimum we must be neatly and cleanly attired. It denigrates the game for the players if the umpire is dirty and scruffy. Remember every match for the players is a Test match and they expect us to act and look like Test match umpires.

Those who have completed the Level1 umpire Program are supplied with an umpire's shirt which should be worn as our badge for officiating.

Look the part and act the part of the official.

Don't forget to wear a hat. If we expect the players to be safety sun conscious we must role model this for them

*It goes without saying that we must never be seen smoking around any junior sporting event and certainly never on the field of play.*

### **What do I take onto the ground?**

Above all else make sure you take a friendly relaxed attitude. Talk to the players with an encouraging tone.

After all, everyone is there to enjoy a game of cricket.

Take a counter, preferably one which will also count overs. Make sure that you know how to use it!

Take a notebook and pencil as you will almost certainly need to write down the number of overs each child has bowled. Write the over number beside their name.

A bowling marker is a useful aid for the bowler. A small plastic disc will suffice.

### **Getting ready to play**

A few minutes before play is due to begin check that both teams are ready to play and you should take the field with your partner.

Make a final check that the stumps are set up correctly. You should have already set them up earlier in the day.

Ensure there are no more than 11 members of the fielding side on the field.

If the game is to commence from your end, record who will bowl the first over, and take his or her cap if need be. You will need to find out if they are bowling right arm or left arm and whether they are bowling "over" or "around" the wicket.

***"Over the wicket"*** means the bowler will deliver the ball from the side of the wicket where the bowling arm is closest to the stumps

***"Around the wicket"*** means the bowler will deliver the ball from the side of the wicket where the bowling arm is furthest from the stumps.

You should tell the batsman who is about to face the delivery which side the bowler is going to bowl from. If he is too young to understand – Show Him!

## Giving the striker his guard

In competitions for very young ages you may have to assist the striker to stand in an appropriate position to receive the delivery. Be patient and supportive. Don't leave a batsman in a completely inappropriate position to receive the delivery.

In older age competitions the players will ask that you give them their 'guard'.

This means you will tell the striker where he has placed his bat in relation to his stumps. At junior level, most batsmen will want "*middle stump*", or "*centre stump*". These two mean the same thing. The batsmen will place their bat on the popping crease, either edge on or face on to you at the bowler's end. You will then tell him to move the bat towards or away from him until the centre stump is covered when viewed from a line between the centre stump at your end and the centre, or middle, stump at the batsmen's end.

Occasionally older players will ask for "*middle and leg*" or "*two legs*". This means they want the bat positioned between the middle stump and their leg stump when viewed on line from the centre stump at your end.

The other main guard is "leg stump", which means the bat is directly in line with the leg stump.

When giving guard do it standing up to the stumps at your end.

When the striker has his bat in the position he wants, tell him "That's centre stump" or whatever. Use the same words he did, so if he asked "Middle stump please", when he has the bat in the right position, say "That's middle".

## Call of Play

Make sure everyone, batsman, fielders and fellow umpire, are ready to start.

**Make sure the scorers are ready.** Generally you should gesture to them and the scorers will wave back.

Make sure you are comfortable with where you are standing. When at the bowlers end begin by standing far enough back so that the top of the bails line up with the popping crease. You can adjust this position according to your comfort but you must be able to see where the bowler's feet land and then, without moving your head, flick your eyes up to the striker and concentrate on what is happening at the far end of the pitch. At square leg stand about 15 to 20 metres from the pitch.

Call "**Play**" and let the fun begin.

## **Chapter 3:**

## **Umpiring the match**

Good umpiring for community junior matches is about creating a positive experience for the players so that they leave at the end of the day and can't wait to come back next week. For the umpire this means being fresh, well prepared and ready to enjoy the game. Be relaxed but focussed.

Try not to take other issues out onto the ground. Devote your focus to what happens on the field in the present. Try not to worry about errors and certainly do not anticipate problems. Worrying about a problem that may not happen will invariably cause another problem to happen.

### **At the bowlers end**

Before each delivery, make sure your counter is correct and ready for the next delivery.

As the bowler commences his run-up begin taking a deep breath such that at the point of delivery you are ready if you have to call a No Ball.

If you do have to make any calls make sure that all players who need to know hear the call. Usually this will be the bowler and batsman.

Keep your head stationary as you watch the bowler's front foot land. Switch your vision by moving your eyes not your head to watch the ball as it travels to the batsman. Do this even if it is a No Ball.

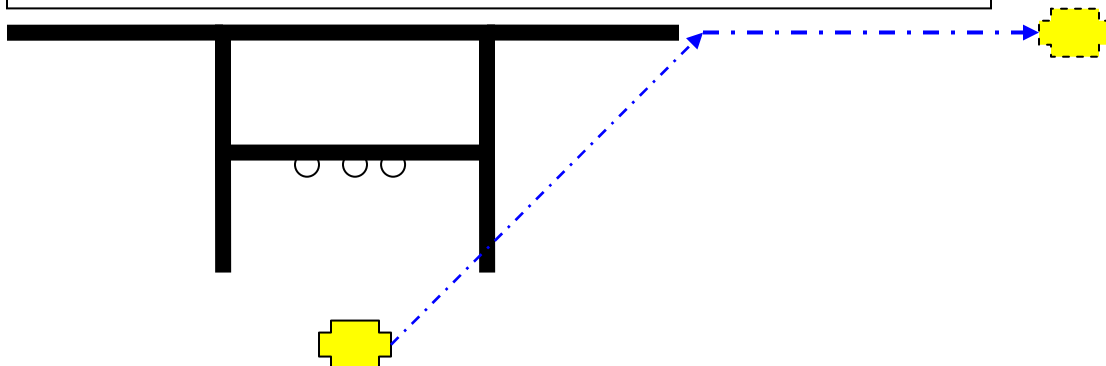
Only once the ball is Dead do you switch off and turn to repeat any signals (No Ball, Wide, Byes or Leg Byes) to the scorers. Remain signalling until the scorers have acknowledged your signal, usually by a wave of the hand.

If the ball is played and runs are being taken, generally move to the same side as the ball, attempting to get into a position in line with the popping crease. By going to this side you can see the ball going into the hands of the fielder as it is returned to the wicket especially if you are judging a run out appeal.

The two proviso's to this are:

- If the ball is being fielded in the arc square to the bowlers stumps where you may interfere with the fielder throwing the ball, move to the other side and
- If you do move to the same side as the ball keep your eye on the ball. Obviously you must also watch the batsmen in running and so once in position, you need to switch your vision from batsman running back to the ball and finally focus on the wicket for the run out. To do this stand side on to the play so that it only involves a swivel of the head to watch both ball and batsman.

If the ball is hit into the field move quickly to the end of the popping crease marking as shown, then keeping the ball in view back away for about 10 to 15 metres. Try and be in position, head and eyes still and focused on the crease, as the ball approaches the wicket. If the return is particularly quick be still in the best position you can manage.



If there is a run out attempt at your partners end watch the stumps at that end to make sure they are broken legally. Your partner may ask for assistance if he is unable to determine this.

After the fourth ball of the over signal two to come by discretely holding two fingers for your partner to see. Don't make a fuss if he does not respond. After the next delivery indicate one to come.

Only when the ball becomes Dead after the sixth legitimate delivery call OVER so everyone on the field hears the call, hand his cap back to the bowler and then commence moving into position. Check whether it will be a right or left hand batsman on strike and move to square leg for that batsman.

## No Ball

Call and signal No Ball at the point of delivery but keep watching the play until the ball becomes dead before turning and signalling to the scorers. You do not need to call again just signal for the scorers. You must wait for their acknowledgement before allowing the game to continue.

See also section in Chapter 4

A No Ball does not count as one in the over however the ball does not become dead on the call of No Ball.

A batsman cannot be out from a “No Ball” in any way that the bowler can get credit for the wicket so that means *he cannot be out* **“Bowled”**; **“Caught”**; **“LBW”**; **“Hit Wicket”** or **“Stumped”**.

The batsmen however *can be out* **“Run Out”**; **“Handled the Ball”**; **“Obstructing the Field”**; **“Hit the Ball Twice”**.

Unless the striker hits the ball all runs scored are recorded as “No Balls”.

## Wide Ball

In general terms a wide is called for any delivery that is out of the reach of the batsman and prevents him from playing a normal cricket stroke standing in his guard position.

The batsman cannot create a wide by moving himself out of reach but will negate a wide if he moves to place himself in reach.

A Wide does not count as one in the over however the ball does not become dead on the call of Wide and a batsman may be dismissed from the subsequent play.

That means a striker can be out from a “Wide” in any of the usual ways but the ball can’t possibly be wide if the striker is **“Bowled”**, **“Caught”**, **“LBW”**, or **“Hit the Ball Twice”**. Thus, the striker can be **out off a “Wide”** if he is **“Stumped”**, **“Hit Wicket”**, and **both batsmen can be out “Run Out”**; **“Handled the Ball”**; or **“Obstructing the Field”**.

## Dead Ball

It is very important to know when the ball is in play and when it is dead.

Once the ball is dead nothing that happens is considered to be part of the play.

The ball comes into play once the bowler commences his run-up and remains live and in play until it is settled in the hands of the wicket-keeper or returned to the bowler.

There are other actions that will cause the ball to become dead and times when the umpire is required to call and signal Dead Ball and these can be found in Law 23.

## **Batsmen stealing a run**

The Laws do not allow the batsmen to attempt to run as the bowler is running in. If the fielding side do not try and run the batsmen out call “Dead Ball” as soon as the batsmen cross. Check your local association rules as to what you should next do as this will probably vary from competition to competition.

## **Ball hitting a helmet on the ground**

If a ball in play hits a fielder’s helmet on the ground it automatically becomes “Dead”. 5 runs are normally awarded for this but check your association rules as to what penalties may apply.

## **Ball hitting cap or clothing discarded or thrown away by a fieldman**

You need to be sure the cap etc. was deliberately thrown away i.e. not simply blown off as he runs, before you enforce any penalty that may apply in your competition.

Do not allow pieces of clothing to be placed on the ground, however at junior level if this does happen it is much better to explain why they shouldn’t leave gear lying around.

## **Having a rest at square leg**

There is no such thing as having a rest at square leg. There are many duties to be carried out during the over whilst you are at square leg.

- When the bowler delivers the ball you must ensure that his action is fair (throwing). Junior players would never be called for ‘throwing’ and the association should have a policy to deal with this. Your responsibility may be to report (tell) someone so the problem can be corrected.
- You must ensure there are no more than two fieldsmen on the leg side behind the line of the popping crease (“Behind square leg”) at your end at the point of delivery. And this means any part of a third fielder.
- Always observe the ball going through to the keeper.
- You must ensure that the striker does not break the wicket at his end as he plays at the ball or sets off for his first run. (Out, “Hit Wicket”)

- You must be alert for the chance of a stumping, particularly if the wicket-keeper is standing up to the stumps.
- Remember, *if the striker moves forward, look for a stumping; if he moves back look for “hit wicket”*.
- Make sure the batsman grounds his bat or person correctly behind the popping crease to complete a run.
- If there is a possibility of a catch being taken, you may need to assist your partner in determining whether or not the ball has been fairly caught. However, your prime responsibility, particularly if the batsmen are running, is to determine whether or not the batsmen have crossed at the instant the catch is taken. If they have crossed, the incoming batsmen will go to the non-strikers end. Remember, under the Laws “level is not crossed”
- Likewise, always observe how the wicket is broken so you can help out your mate if needed.
- Generally be aware of what is going on at all times.
- Count the balls in the over and indicate two to come when four legitimate balls have been delivered.
- After the sixth ball of the over becomes “Dead” begin to walk towards the bowler’s end as a help to your mate. Look for the bowler and go and get his cap; that will help keep the game moving.

## Chapter 4

## Laws of Cricket

There are 42 Laws of Cricket and umpires should be well acquainted with most them. Some Laws cover quite obscure and rare events however there are some that will occur in every match and must be known.

### No Ball

The front foot must have some part of it **behind the back edge of the popping crease**. It may be **grounded or raised** and the umpire has to make this judgement. Once the foot has landed behind the popping crease, it may slide forward over the line and this is legitimate.

The back foot must not **touch the return crease** or else a No Ball will be called.

There are other instances that will cause a No Ball to be called including;

- Changing the nominated mode of delivery - around or over, right or left hand
- Unfair delivery – the arm (throwing)
- Ball bouncing MORE THAN twice or rolling along the ground before reaching the popping crease.
- Ball coming to rest in front of the strikers wicket. – this also immediately becomes a dead ball.
- Any part of the wicket-keeper in front of stumps at time of delivery.
- More than two fielders behind square leg.
- Fielder encroaching on the wicket.
- Dangerous or unfair bowling.
- Deliberate high full pitched balls.

Some of these may be modified by individual playing conditions.

Remember a batsman may still be dismissed from a No Ball. See previous.

## **Appeals**

A **batsman** may “walk” if he knows he is out but an umpire cannot give a batsman out unless there is an appeal.

The fielding side may appeal up until the bowler begins his run up for the next ball, or you call “Time” to start a scheduled break, e.g. drinks or tea.

The call of “Over” does not invalidate an appeal.

## **Breaking the wicket fairly**

For a decision of “Bowled”, “Run Out”, or “Stumped” the fielding side must “put the wicket down” fairly. This means at least one bail must be completely and permanently removed from the top of the stumps, or a stump is completely knocked out of the ground (not just leaning over).

This can be done using the ball or, by using the arm of the hand holding the ball.

For “Hit Wicket”, the striker’s wicket is put down by his bat, his person (e.g. treading on the stumps) or clothing becoming detached (e.g. his helmet falls onto the stumps).

If there are no bails being used, e.g. because they keep blowing off, then you only have to be satisfied that the wicket has been hit by the ball, bat, person etc.

## **Batsman protecting himself from injury**

In general, if a batsman is taking action to prevent him being injured he will not be given out. For example, if he puts a hand up to stop a ball hitting him in the face he cannot be out “Handled the Ball”, but, in this case if the hand is holding the bat he still risks being caught.

If a batsman has *already* gained his ground (“is in his crease”) and then leaves it to avoid being hit by an incoming ball he cannot be “Run Out”.

## **Protective helmets worn by fielders**

If a ball hit by a striker touches a helmet worn by a fielder, the striker cannot be out caught. Play continues unless the ball has *lodged* in the fielder’s helmet in which case the ball is automatically “dead”.

In much the same way if the ball rebounds directly from a helmet worn by a fielder, the batsmen cannot be run out unless the ball is touched by a fielder after it has hit the helmet. If the ball rebounds from a helmet worn by the wicketkeeper the striker cannot be stumped, but he may still be “Run Out” as above.

## Substitutes

A fieldsman may have a substitute if he is ill or injured during the match. This is any time after the toss until the end of the game and includes time between days play, e.g. during the week between a game played over two successive Saturdays.

A substitute cannot bat, bowl, nor act as wicketkeeper or Captain.

## Runners

If a batsman is injured and needs a runner then the injured batsman must stay at the wicketkeepers end. If he is not the striker, he is out of the game and can only be out “Obstructing the Field” or “Handled the Ball” if he interferes with the fielding side.

***This means he cannot be run out if he is not the striker.***

If the injured batsman **is the striker, he must stay behind the crease at the wicketkeeper’s end.** If the wicket at that end is put down, first look to see if the injured striker is in his ground. If he is not, then he is out, regardless of where the other batsmen are. If he is in his ground look to see if the runner or non striker, as the case may be, is in or out of his ground.

## LBW

This law creates the greatest debate as we have to decide on an action that will never occur – would the ball have hit the stumps?

However before getting to this stage in the decision making process there are other points to consider:

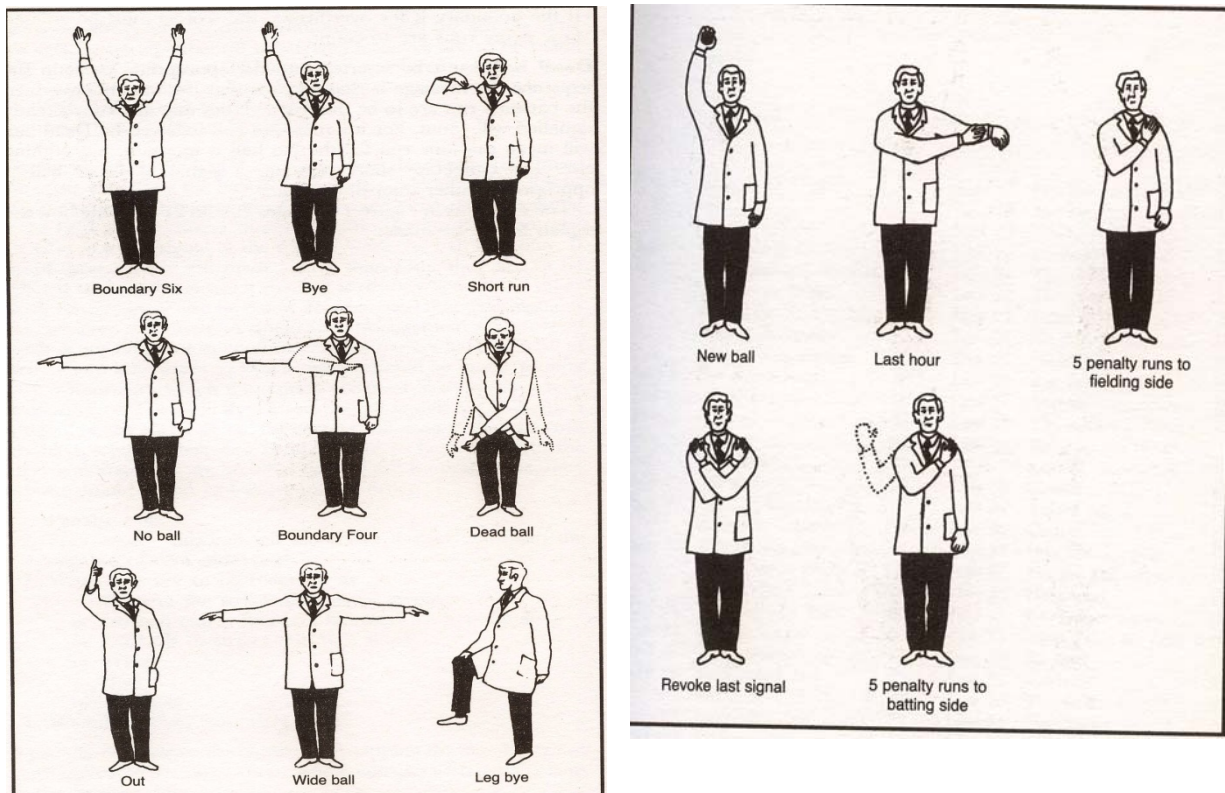
1. You cannot be out LBW if the ball pitches outside of leg stump.
2. Only the first interception on the striker is considered.
3. If the point of impact is outside the line of the wickets the striker can only be out if he was not playing a shot.

4. If a full toss hits the striker, simply consider the ball has “pitched” on him rather than the pitch and the same questions then apply. You must then assume the path of the ball will be the same after impact as before. The behaviour of previous balls is not considered, just what you see before you.
5. The striker’s stance at the moment the ball comes into play for that delivery determines the off side.

## Chapter 5

## Umpires' Signals

The official signals used by umpires are shown below.



Do not allow the game to continue until all signals have been acknowledged by the scorers.

Give multiple signals one after the other in the time order of the events they represent.

Get an acknowledgement from the scorers for each individual signal before giving the next. E.g. if a “No Ball” misses the bat and does not hit the striker and is then missed by the wicketkeeper and goes to the boundary, the signals to the scorers when the ball is dead will be:-

1. No Ball, wait for acknowledgement,
2. Bye signal (no runs to the batsman), wait for acknowledgement,
3. Signal “Boundary 4”, wait for acknowledgement.

In this case a total of 5 “No Balls” are scored. (1 for penalty + 4 for boundary)

In conclusion the most important aspect of umpiring, especially with juniors who are still developing their love of the game is to exude your enjoyment of your role and carry it out to the very best of your ability.

Look like an official and act like an official.

Enjoyment, participation and safety are the key elements of what we do.

Remember

Umpiring..... it's serious good fun.