



JUNIOR CRICKET FORMAT RECOMMENDATIONS UNDER 8-11s

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WELCOME

If you're reading this, it's fair to assume you're interested in bringing the joy of cricket to the next generation. So, first things first:

Thank you!

We appreciate your efforts and we're sure the youngsters in your life do too. This handbook is designed to help you create a playing experience that will increase their enjoyment and put fun at the heart of the sport.



“The proposed changes to pitch lengths and formats are a product of extensive research and trialling conducted by ECB over the past 3 years. I am impressed by the evidence of an improvement in techniques for batting, bowling and fielding.

However, the most exciting feedback has come from the players themselves who found the new formats increased their enjoyment of playing our great game. To quote a son to his mum ‘that was fun, when can I play again?’”

**- Junior Cricket Ambassador and Former England Captain
Andrew Strauss**

INTRODUCTION

Success in cricket often comes down to the basics. Over the last three years, we've been engaged in extensive research into how we can help children aged 8-11 develop the skills that will stay with them for life, alongside helping them to understand the most important part of the game: fun.

Now we want to engage leagues, clubs, schools and counties to adopt the recommendations and create a fantastic, consistent experience for all children – regardless of where they live.



Our overall aim is to:

- Maximise participation across the age group
- Get children passionate about playing and to sustain that passion
- Continue the development of the skills and techniques learnt in All Stars Cricket and through Chance to Shine at primary school

To achieve this, we've made a thoroughly-researched set of recommendations, including some important changes to the way the game is played.

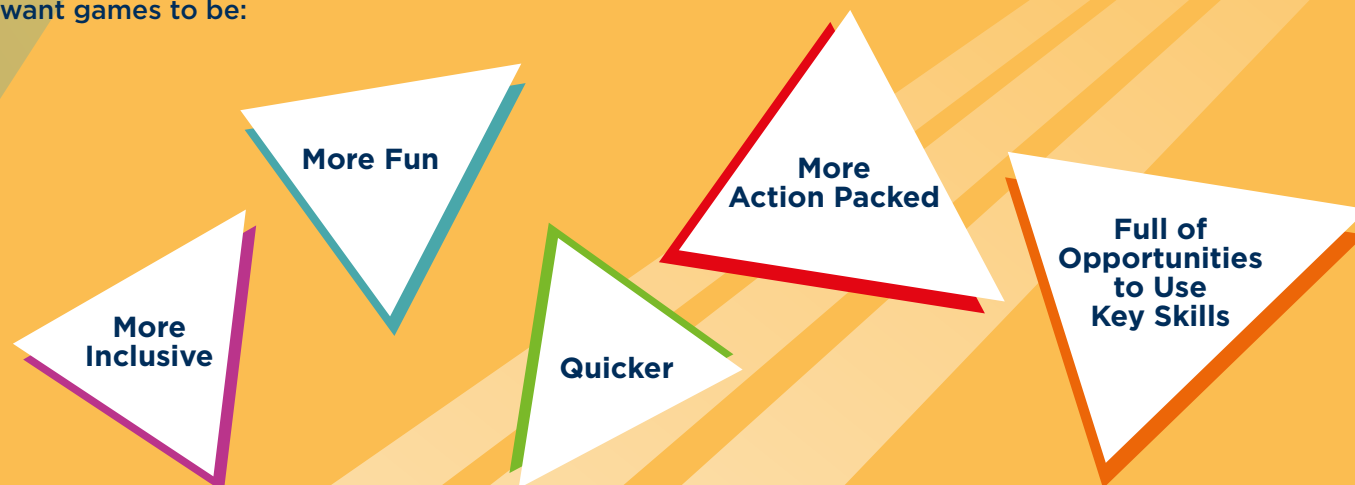
This modified game features:

- Fewer players
- Shorter pitches
- Smaller boundaries
- Shorter matches
- Modified equipment

THE EXPERIENCE

A big part of our aim is to ensure children can continue the progress they've been making at the same time as having fun. With that in mind, we've created match formats that are inclusive and play to the abilities of the age group. Fewer players means more action for each participant, while a smaller playing area and a faster pace of play allows fielders, bowlers and batters to enjoy more meaningful moments in each match.

This is especially key for under 8's and 9's boys and girls – with the formats for under 10's and 11's more geared towards getting them ready for the next step in their development. In both cases we want games to be:



In short, it's about making cricket vibrant, welcoming and fun – the sort of activity your whole sporting community will want to get involved in.

ADVICE FOR TEAM MANAGERS AND COACHES

Youngsters depend on adult guidance to make matches happen and to keep them running smoothly. You can also do a lot to set a fun, inclusive tone that keeps players coming back regardless of what happens on the field.

For example:

- Making sure all players understand how the game is going to work (including details such as their place in the batting order, or how the fielders should rotate).
- Minimising stoppages in play, keeping things going and ensuring all players are actively involved in play.
- Making sure batting pairs are well balanced.
- Helping parents, children, volunteers – and anyone else in your community – to get involved.
- Keeping the facilities in good shape and creating a welcoming atmosphere.

U8s AND U9s GROUND SET-UP

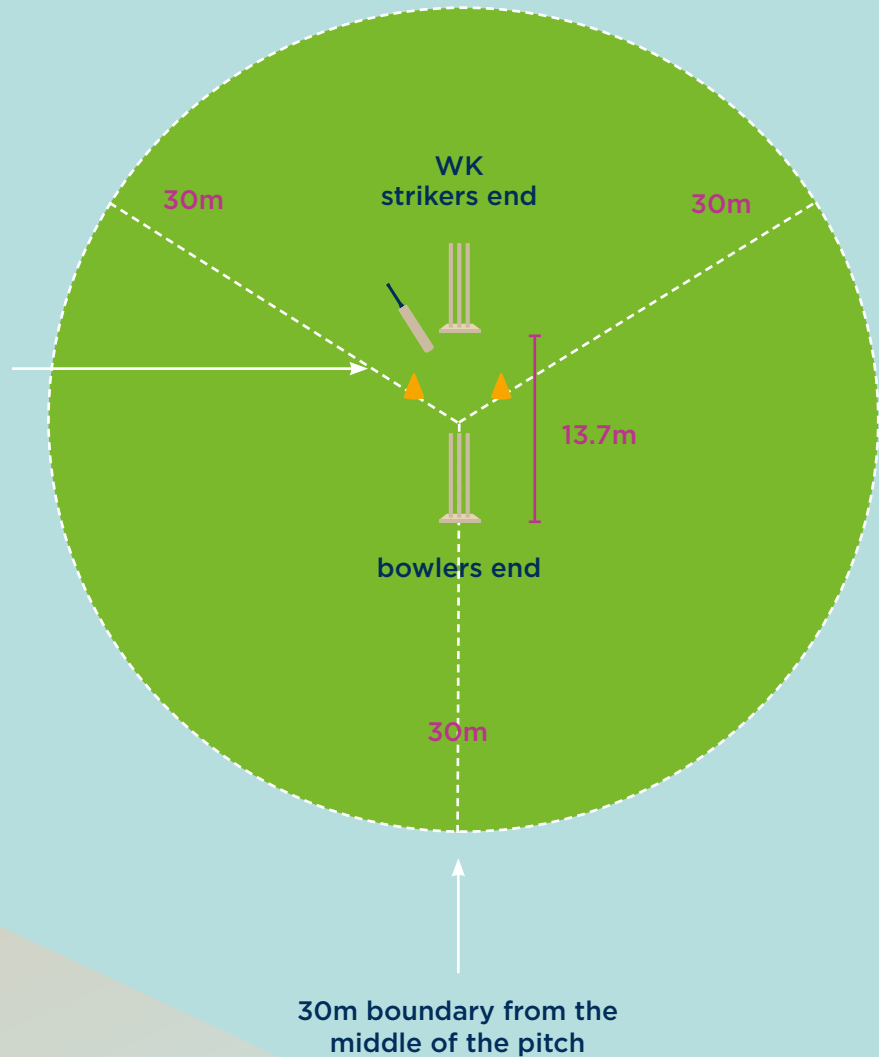
EQUIPMENT

To get a game going you'll need:

- Plastic bats
- Portable stumps
- Measuring tape (to help measure the pitch and boundary)
- Cones, rope or markers (to show the boundary)

Batting tees mark the crease approx 1.2 metres from the stumps and act as wide markers

GROUND SET-UP

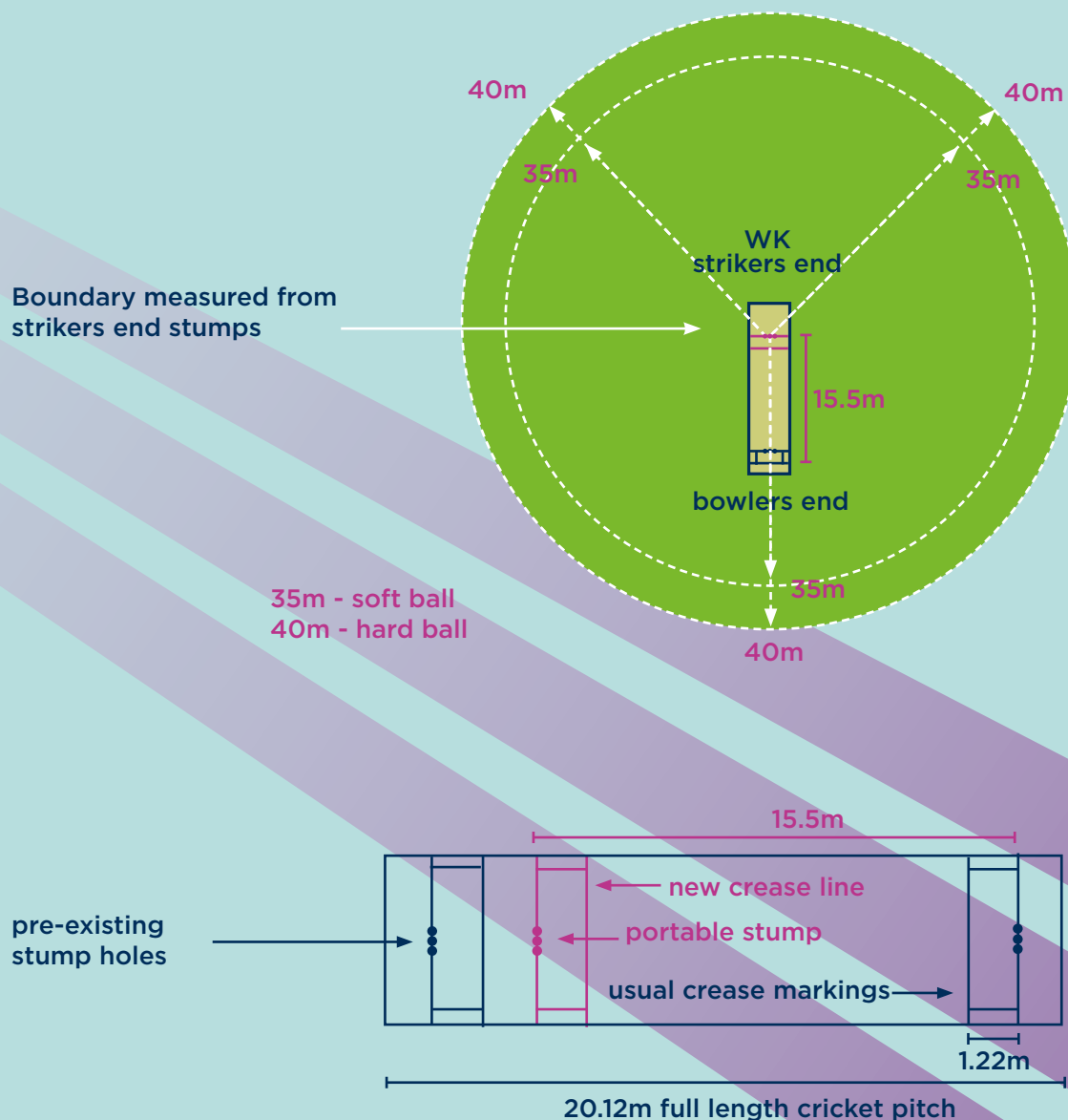


U10s AND U11s GROUND SET-UP

EQUIPMENT

To get a game going you'll need:

- Bats (wooden or plastic)
- Portable stumps (wooden or plastic)
- Measuring tape (to help measure the pitch and boundary)
- Cones, rope or markers (to show the boundary)
- Tape, paint or chalk (to mark the crease)
- If you're playing with a hard ball, you'll need protective equipment. For more information, visit:
<https://www.ecb.co.uk/concussion-in-cricket/helmets>



FORMATS AND SUPPORTING RULES: UNDER 8s AND UNDER 9s

SET UP

- Format: Pairs cricket
- Players: Two teams of six
- Playing area: A 13.7m (15 yards) pitch, surrounded by a 30m boundary – all within the grassy outfield
- Game length: The game should last one innings of 12 overs per team and no longer than two hours
- Equipment: Use a light rubber ball. For the bats, plastic is fine

BATTING

- The batting team form three pairs. Each pair bats for four overs, with the coaches doing their bit to ensure players share the strike
- At this age getting time at the crease isn't just fun, it's essential. If a player is given out five runs are added to the fielding teams score but they continue to bat
- Batters swap ends at the end of each over
- When a player is given out they swap the strike
- Batters can be given out in the following ways - bowled, caught, run out, stumped and hit wicket
- No Leg Before Wicket (LBW) unless the batter deliberately blocks the ball with their leg or foot
- Once the four overs are done, the next pair take the field. Once the 12 overs are complete and all three pairs have batted, the innings is over

BOWLING

- All six players bowl two overs each, all from the same end. This way, they are never waiting long for a chance to take a wicket
- Umpires should encourage players to bowl with a straight arm
- Keep run-ups short to ensure a fast-paced match
- There are only six deliveries per over. No balls and wides are not re-bowled apart from in the final over

FIELDING

- Rotate the fielders so that everyone gets a feel for the different positions

FORMATS AND SUPPORTING RULES: UNDER 10s AND UNDER 11s

Please Note – the pairs rules described for the under 8s and under 9s can also be applied to both the soft ball and hard ball options for under 10s and under 11s. Coaches should adapt appropriately to ensure all children are fully engaged in the game.

SET UP

- Format: Standard cricket, hard ball or soft ball
- Players: Two teams of eight
- Playing area: The pitch should be 15.5m (17 yards), set up on the outfield, a grass wicket or an artificial wicket. Use a 35m boundary with a soft ball or 40m with a hard ball
- Game length: The game should last one innings of 16 - 20 overs per team and no longer than two hours
- Equipment: Use either a 4¾ ounce cricket ball or a soft rubber ball. Bats should be wooden or plastic. Protective equipment should be worn when playing hard ball cricket – helmet, pads, gloves and protector

BATTING

- All batters retire at 25 runs. The last scoring shot counts
- Batters have two lives
- If only one batter remains, a retired player can come back in to partner them
- Batters to swap ends following a dismissal. If there is a run out the not out batter should face the next delivery
- Batters can be given out in the following ways – bowled, caught, run out, stumped, hit wicket and LBW

BOWLING

- There are only six deliveries per over. No balls and wides are not re-bowled apart from in the final over
- All players must bowl at least two overs (except the wicket keeper in hard ball cricket) and no more than four overs
- Bowlers are limited to a short run up, encouraging a fast-paced game with plenty of action and minimal down time
- Umpires are asked to encourage bowling with a straight arm
- Bowlers are to bowl from the same end for the entire game

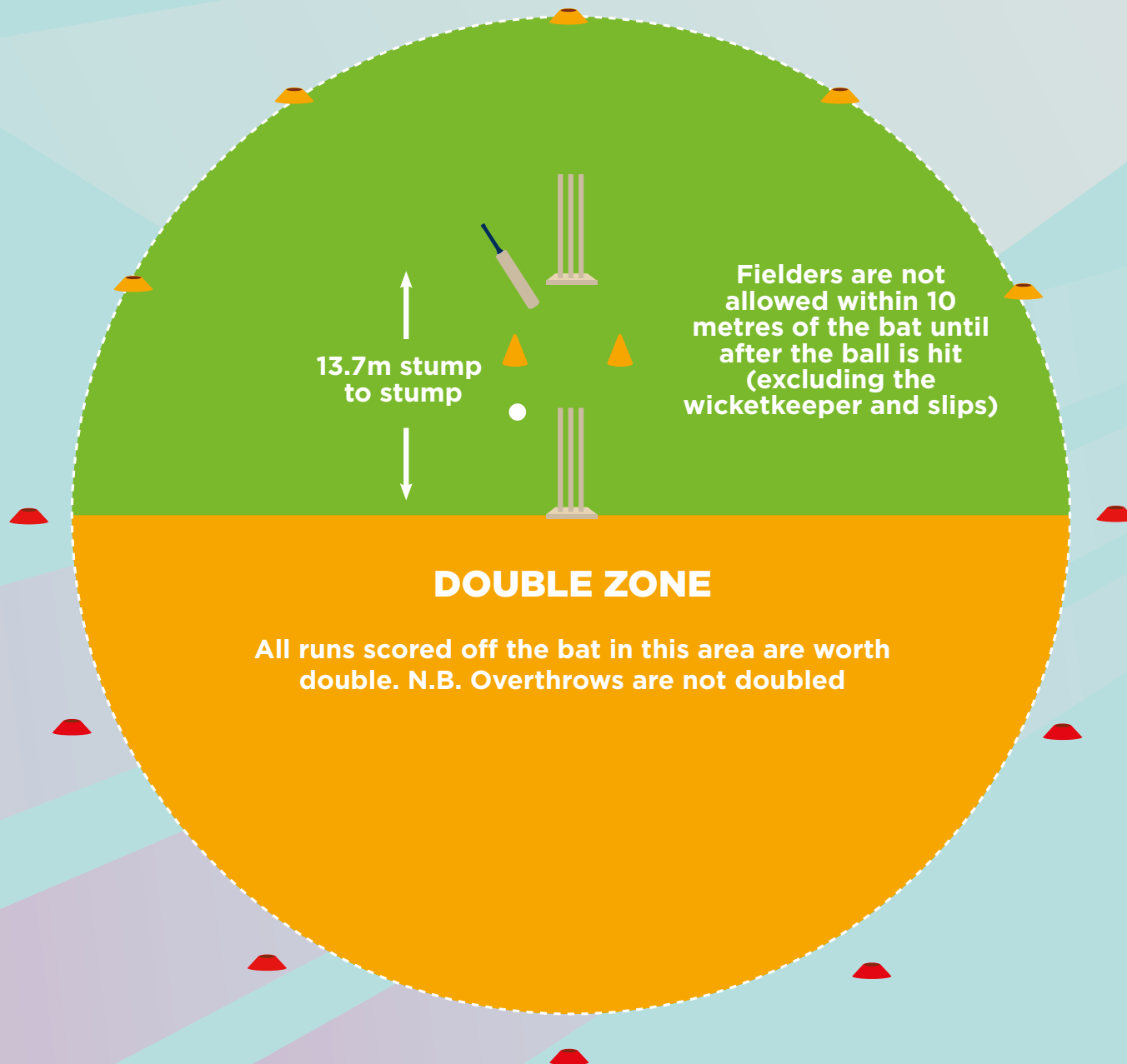
FIELDING

- Rotate the fielders so that everyone gets a feel for the different positions. When using a hard ball, the wicketkeeper should stay in place for the duration of the innings
- In soft ball cricket, the wicket keeper should be rotated

DOUBLE ZONES

Double zones can be used to encourage flair, by trying new and different shots and speeding up scoring. This is how they work:

- By playing strokes into the area behind the bowler's end stumps, batters can get twice as many runs.
- To make things more tempting, only two fielders can position themselves in the double zone before the ball is bowled.
- You might also choose to spice things up in other ways. For example, making the last ball of every over worth double – no matter where it's hit.
- Double zones are a fun way to reward batters. But we don't want to punish fielders – runs scored from overthrows aren't doubled.



NO BALLS, WIDES AND FREE HITS

NO BALLS AND WIDES

No balls should be called if:

- The ball bounces over head height when the batter is in their normal batting stance (bouncer)
- The ball reaches the batter above waist height without bouncing (beamer)
- The bowler oversteps the crease

A wide is called if the ball goes either side of the wide markers at the batter's crease.

If the batter manages to hit it, the ball doesn't count as wide. Players should be encouraged to only swing at wide deliveries if they feel they can score more than two runs – improving their judgment as well as their technique.

No balls and wides add two runs to the batting team's score, but do not result in extra deliveries. Extra deliveries are only re-bowled during the final over of each innings.

FREE HITS

There are no free hits in pairs cricket regardless of age group.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT'S THE RIGHT BAT SIZE?

A big bat can look cool and, naturally, you'd think with a bigger face it'd be easier to make a clean connection, but it's important to think about weight. If it's too heavy, a big bat could have a negative impact on technical development and the players enjoyment of the game. Make sure players are able to swing freely using only their top hand. In terms of length, it should come up to just below their hip.

BAT SIZE	2	3	4	5
PLAYER HEIGHT (M)	1.29-1.37	1.38-1.44	1.45-1.50	1.51-1.60

WHAT ABOUT HELMETS AND HEAD PROTECTORS?

We recommend that batters and wicket keepers wear head protectors during matches and practice sessions.

If you're responsible for young players, make sure this guidance is followed and remember – protection should be worn even if parents say otherwise.

You can find more information here:

<https://www.ecb.co.uk/concussion-in-cricket/helmets>

HOW SHOULD COACHES ENSURE BATTERS SHARE THE STRIKE IN PAIRS CRICKET?

To encourage a fair share of the strike coaches should consider rotating the strike after three balls.

IS THERE LBW IN UNDER 8S AND UNDER 9S CRICKET?

No, unless the batter deliberately blocks the ball with their leg or foot from hitting the wicket.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN IN THE LAST OVER OF A PAIRS GAME, IN RELATION TO NO BALLS AND WIDES?

Two runs will be awarded to the batting team for each wide ball and no-ball bowled, but no extra ball will be allocated, except in the final over of each innings when, in addition to the two runs, an extra ball will be bowled.

HOW DO I KNOW WHICH BATTERS HAVE ONE OR TWO LIVES LEFT?

Before the game, agree with the opposition, umpires and scorers what signal will be used to indicate when a batter has lost their first life.

IF A BATTER HAS RETIRED AT 25, DO THEY STILL HAVE TWO LIVES?

Retired batters can continue their innings if only one batter remains, however when they are next out they are out.

CAN A BATTER SCORE MORE THAN 25?

Yes, for example if a batter were on 24 and scored a six, they would retire on 30.

HOW DO I DOWNLOAD THE PLAY-CRICKET SCORER APP?

Go to <http://www.play-cricket.com/updates>.

WHAT SCORE DOES A TEAM START WITH IN PAIRS CRICKET?

If doesn't matter, '0' or '200' are common starting scores. Runs are never deducted, only added.

WHAT HAPPENS IF IT RAINS?

Check the weather before the game and play as much of the game as you can ensuring it's fair for both teams. Use the following as a guide for what constitutes a game:

- Under 8s and under 9s: six overs per team
- Under 10s and under 11s: eight overs per team

FORMATS OVERVIEW

INDICATIVE AGE	PITCH LENGTH	GAME TYPE	GAME LENGTH	BALL TYPE	BOUNDARY SIZE	PLAYERS PER SIDE
U8/U9	13.7m (15 yards)	Modified on outfield	12 overs (<2 hrs)	Light rubber ball	30m	6
U10-U11 Soft ball	15.5m (17 yards)	T20	16-20 overs (<2 hrs)	Soft rubber ball	35m	8
U10-U11 Hard ball	15.5m (17 yards)	T20	16-20 overs (<2 hrs)	4¾ ounces	40m	8