

## Secretary's report 2018

Good evening everyone and thank you for attending. I expect that the majority of you will know that the Laws of Cricket were subject to a major revision which came in to effect on 1 October 2017. A lot of the changes will not affect us as a club, as they concern matches that are, for example multi innings and multi day. In addition there is a lot of detail that really only affects umpires and how they manage matches.

However, there are changes which will affect Oakworth Cricket Club, its players, spectators and officials and therefore I intend to give you a stripped down version of those changes. There are also a number of changes made to the Craven & District League rules, which also impact the club and I will take you through these as well.

### The Spirit of Cricket

There is a lot of talk about the spirit of cricket and rightly so because cricket is unique in the way in which it has attempted (and mostly succeeded) in honouring its traditional values. However, as we all know, over the years player behaviour at all levels of the game has deteriorated. It is partly in response to this that some of the Laws have changed, and one significant new Law, 42, has been introduced.

The spirit of cricket however remains, and all of us involved in the game should seek at all times in whatever capacity we are involved to ensure, that cricket is played in the right way. There is not one of us that do not recognise what is acceptable and what is not. My message to you is make sure that when you represent Oakworth Cricket Club you do so in a way that ensures your club, is not involved with reporting by umpires (or others) for breaches of the Laws, or the spirit of cricket. Captains please note that your responsibility has not changed in that you are always personally responsible for the conduct of your players, in addition to the player's individual responsibility for their own behaviour.

So let's turn now to the individual Laws.

### Law 5 – The bat

New size restrictions have been introduced on the width and depth of bats. However, the ECB has granted recreational cricket a two year moratorium to comply. Only from 2020, might some umpires carry with them, and use bat gauges for determining whether bats comply with the Law.

### Law 8 – The wickets

The Law now provides that mechanisms which tether the bails to the stumps can be used, however this will first require that the Craven & District League authorise the use of tethered bails. It is my recommendation that we as a club should petition the League to provide this authority. The thinking behind this change is to prevent the type of serious injury experienced by Mark Boucher, where a bail struck him in the eye which forced his early retirement.

### Law 12 – Last hour

The Craven League is one of few leagues playing single innings cricket that has a provision for a last hour, in games which have been weather affected. The change to this Law is to clarify when the last hour starts and finishes. The start of the last hour will start at 7pm, or if an over is in progress at 7pm, on the conclusion of that over. The last hour will finish though at 8pm, or on the conclusion of the over in progress at 8pm, regardless of when the umpire signals the start of the last hour. This is of course providing that the required minimum number of overs have been completed. If they have not, the game will continue for as long as is necessary, subject to the umpires being happy that it is still safe and reasonable for play to continue.

#### Law 19 – Boundaries / Law 33 caught

The Laws now make it a requirement that if a sightscreen is within the field of play, the boundary must be placed in such a way, as to take the sightscreen out of play, and that the positioning of the boundary marker should ensure that the sightscreen can move from side to side, without the need to adjust the boundary marker.

For the more athletic fielders, clarity is given as to what is allowed when attempting catches on the boundary. Specifically if a player parries, or throws a ball up whilst still in play, steps out of play and whilst airborne in returning to play from outside the boundary can complete a catch.

#### Law 20 – Dead ball / Law 38 run out / Law 39 stumped

For many years now helmets worn by fielders and wicket keepers have been common place. In recognition of this the Laws now provide that catches, stumping's and run outs can be affected where a ball comes off the helmet worn by a fielder, or wicket keeper. In addition if a ball becomes trapped in the helmet worn by a fielder, the ball is still live and in play and therefore a catch can be completed, if the ball has not first touched the ground.

#### Law 21 and Law 23 – No ball / Bye and leg bye

A ball which bounces over the head of a striker, stood upright at the popping crease should be called 'no ball' by the standing umpire. This is not a change to the Law but greater prominence has been given to it, so we may see more umpires applying the Law.

Bye and leg byes scored off no balls will no longer be attributed to the bowler (perhaps some scorers did this anyway) but will instead be recorded separately, with umpires as previously first signalling 'no ball' followed by bye, or leg bye.

Probably affecting junior cricket more than senior cricket, where a ball pitches off the pitch, it should be called as a no ball. For clarity the 'pitch' is the cut area that should extend five feet either side of the imaginary line joining the middle stumps.

#### Law 24 substitute fielders

The law now provides that a substitute fielder can act as wicket keeper, with the consent of the umpires. The exception to this would be if the wicket keeper's absence is as a result of a level 3, or level 4 offence, under Law 42. More of that later.

Also under Law 24 is the concept of penalty time for players being off the field of play. This is to say that depending on the reason for being off the field of play, penalty time may have to be served before a player, can bat, or bowl. My advice to Captains when this situation occurs is check with the Umpires whether an absent player is incurring penalty time or not, and if they are, when they will be allowed to bat, or bowl, once they have returned to the field of play.

#### Law 25 – Runners

A runner acting for a striker who is on strike must remain with some part of his body, or his bat held in his hand behind the popping crease, until the delivered ball has reached the striker. Failure to comply with this will result in any runs being disallowed, in much the same ways as leg byes where there is no stroke are disallowed. In addition of course the keeper has an opportunity to run out the striker, as a result of the action of his runner and any penalty runs applied for the ball striking a fielders helmet not being worn, will also be disallowed.

#### Law 41 - Dangerous and unfair bowling

For bouncers aimed at the body or head of a striker repetition is no longer something which umpires need to consider for a delivery to be considered dangerous. What umpires are instructed to consider are:

Speed, direction, and the relative skill of the striker

Where an umpire considers a ball to have met the conditions of Law 41.6, a first and final warning will be applied to that bowler for the remainder of the innings. A subsequent occurrence from that bowler will result in the umpire instructing the captain to remove the bowler from bowling.

#### Law 41 – Non pitching deliveries (beamers to you and me)

The distinction between quick and slow has been removed, in that any delivery irrespective of pace, that is above waist height of the striker at the popping crease is considered in breach. For clarity the waist is above the bottom rib, rather than as many people think the waist band of the trousers. A good rule of thumb when watching is that the bottom rib is generally at the same height as your elbow. You should note that the height of each batsman will determine where waist height is for that batsman.

The Law has also reduced the warnings given to bowlers to a first and final prior to suspension. However, the Craven League have decided to continue with the first warning, second and final followed by suspension approach.

If the umpires determine that a deliberate non-pitching delivery has been bowled the bowler will be suspended from bowling from the rest of the match with immediate effect. The same is also true for a deliberate from foot no ball.

#### Law 41 – distraction, deception or obstruction

This Law makes it an offence to attempt to distract an opponent, or as many of you may have seen from Australia last September, attempting to deceive an opponent through what is known as 'mock' fielding. A contravention of this Law will result in five penalty runs and a report to the Executive.

## Law 42 – Players’ conduct

This is the Law that has attracted the most attention in the general media, with many referring to yellow and red cards. It is worth saying that ‘cards’ have not been introduced in to cricket and it is also worth stating that an umpire will not ‘send’ a player off. If a player is removed from the game, whether temporarily under a level 3 offence, or permanently under a level 4 offence, the umpire will instruct the Captain to remove the player.

There are provisions under Law 16 (The result) that allow an umpire to ‘award’ a match should a Captain refuse to comply with the umpires’ request to remove a player. It should also be noted that if an offence is committed by a batsmen, the Captain of the batting side will be summoned to the field of play by the umpire to inform them of what is happening and of any sanctions.

For each and every offence under Law 42, umpires are required to complete a report to the governing body. For each offence at level 2, 3 and 4, or for a second level 1 offence, or for a level 1 offence following a previous offence at any level, five penalty runs will be awarded to the other side. I do not propose to run through the types of offences that would trigger sanctions at the different levels. However, it might be useful to point out the entry level offences that would likely result in an offence at Level 1. These include:

- Wilful mistreating any part of the cricket ground
- Showing dissent at an umpires decision by word or action
- Using language that, in the circumstances, is obscene, offensive or insulting
- Making an obscene gesture
- Appealing excessively
- Advancing towards an umpire in an aggressive manner when appealing
- Any other misconduct, the nature of which, is in the umpires opinion, equivalent to a level 1 offence

My message to everyone therefore is simple, make playing cricket an enjoyable experience, by playing the game properly. Avoid the use of bad language, dissent, displays of anger, bat throwing, send off’s etc etc etc. If we do that then Law 42 will have no impact on our club.

However, let me assure you there will be umpires who will be looking to use Law 42 at the earliest opportunity and some who will positively delight in seeking to apply them to their fullest extent. In fact for those umpires who have bothered to study over the winter and attend training courses the message from the ECB and ACO is quite clear, it is an umpires duty to apply the Law and report, as only through consistency of application of the Law, will player behaviour improve.

Speaking as the Secretary of your club, be also quite clear, this club will not tolerate being dragged through the mud of disciplinary proceedings by the Craven & District League as a result of the poor behaviour of our players, or members. Players or members who cannot conduct themselves properly or according to the spirit of cricket and the Laws can expect your club to take firm and decisive action.

Enough of the Laws, let me now briefly tell you about changes to the Craven & District League rules.

At the Annual General Meeting of the League in December a number of changes were made to the League's playing rules. The most relevant changes are:

- Play-cricket must be completed by mid-night on Sunday for Sunday matches
- Confirmation of the result on Play-Cricket by the away side has to be entered on Play-cricket by 6pm on Monday

I have informed Committee that I will not be available to carry out this task as much, or at all this season, as I am umpiring in the Aire Wharfe, and therefore it needs to be agreed who will assume this responsibility for each of our three teams.

The other changes are:

- Registration of players on the day of the match must be done by a phone call to the League Secretary, with subsequent completion of Play-Cricket
- The tea interval has been extended to 30 minutes. Previously this was 20 minutes. Personally I find this a baffling decision, when much of the complaint about cricket and the reason cited for players leaving, or not being attracted to our game, is as a result of the length of time it takes to play. It might have made sense had the Craven League at the same time as introducing a longer tea break, introduced time restrictions on bowling overs, but on its own, the decision is to me illogical. As a matter of interest the Aire Wharfe League and Bradford Premier League both have 25 minute tea intervals.
- The Laws of cricket are to be applied in full in matches officiated by panel umpires, except where the Craven League rules have specifically set aside the Laws, in favour of their own rules, with the Non-pitching delivery being the prime example. This change brings in to play for the first time in the Craven League the award of five penalty runs for the following offences:
  - o Deliberate short runs
  - o Illegal fielding (that is using for example a hat, or extending a shirt to field a ball) – Law 28
  - o Unfair play – Law 41
  - o Players conduct – Law 42
  - o These are in addition to the existing aspects of Law that the Craven League already applied of fielders returning to the field of play without permission (and coming in to contact with the ball) and the ball striking a helmet not being worn by a member of the fielding team, or any other wilfully discarded item of clothing.
- Where a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> team fixture is conceded this will result in the the team conceding the fixture and the team immediately above in the club structure being deducted one league point.
- Post match reviews involving the Captains and Umpires are to be introduced in divisions 1 and 2.
- All matches in divisions 1 and 2 must start with a new ball in each innings

This may all seem quite daunting but in truth I would expect the vast majority of games to take place much as before, and that you will notice very little difference. However, when something does occur it is important that players (and our venerable supporters on the top wall) have an

understanding of the Laws and match regulations. Finally and underlying everything it goes without saying that Umpires decisions should be respected by both players and spectators.

Can I wish everyone connected with our club good luck for the season, whether that is on the field, or off it, whether senior or junior.

Michael Davison – Secretary

March 2018