

Junior Cricket

Australia's victories in India have boosted popular enthusiasm for one of the world's great games.

Cricket encourages excellence and is indeed a game for champions. However, the game which has given scope to the masterful skills of W.G. Grace, Don Bradman, Wes Hall, Richard Hadlee and Sachin Tendulkar is structured in a fashion sometimes inappropriate for the development of youngsters of average or below-average ability. Not all youngsters develop at the same rate, and there are other reasons why kids may arrive at their first primary school encounter with cricket, without possessing even rudimentary ball skills. The child who comes to primary school from an environment of backyard cricket, older siblings and sportive parents begins organised sport with a momentum which is not shared by all.

Even at a very junior level, some sporting coaches focus their coaching effort on winning, to the exclusion of concern for motivating uncoordinated youngsters and encouraging the inept. A child can play four seasons of cricket at primary school without ever being asked to bowl, and without ever keeping wickets, while being accustomed to batting at the bottom of the order with no expectation of facing more than a couple of balls before dismissal. Junior Cricket needs a variant of the game which encourages all youngsters and can be played by boys and girls with a range of age, size and talent, but which places no impediment in the way of future stars of the game.

This variant of the game advocated below is named for a life-long cricket enthusiast, a useful right-hand middle-order batsman for Manly Veterans (1950-1960), the man who introduced cricket to Taiwan in 1961, the late Douglas Darby, who for 33 years represented Manly in the NSW Parliament.



The September 2003 Newsletter of the Historical Society of South Australia carried the above work of cricketing art, plus the following comment:
"W.G. Grace and his All-England Eleven, who played against the Yorke's Peninsula Cricketing Association team of 22 (which included James Chittleborough) at Kadina in March 1874. [From the Australasian Sketcher, 27 December 1873.]"



DOUG DARBY RULES

FOR JUNIOR CRICKET

Team Size

Each team has twelve members. In each innings, twelve team members bat and eleven team members field.

Duration

The game is played in four sessions, each of six 6-ball overs (the short game). If a longer version is required, the game may be played in four sessions, each of twelve overs (the long game). In either case, the single innings of each team is played in two alternating sessions. A two-innings game is also possible. If bad weather causes cancellation of the game after the first half is completed and before the completion of the second half, then the scores at the end of the first half (each team having batted for one session) become the result.

Principal variations from the regular game

There are six batting pairs on each team. Each pair comes to the wicket together to face a specified number of overs. When a batter is out, the batter is not dismissed, but instead is debited a penalty expressed in runs. Each member of the bowling side (other than the 'keeper) bowls at least one over in the short game, and at least two overs in the long game.

Before each game

Part of each team's kit is a bag of marbles, numbered one to twelve. The precursor to the game is the draw, when in the presence of the other team each player draws a marble from the bag to establish individual roles for the game.

The Results of the Draw

- The player with the number one marble is the scorer for the team's first session in the field.
- The player with the number two marble is the wicketkeeper for the team's first session in the field. For the team's second session in the field the wicketkeeper and the scorer reverse roles.
- The players with marbles numbers one and two form batting pair "A"
- The player with marble number three is the captain.
- The players with marbles numbers three and four form batting pair "B"
- The player with marble number five is the vice-captain

- The players with marbles numbers five and six form batting pair “C”
- The players with marbles numbers seven and eight form batting pair “D”. In the short game, players with marbles seven and eight each bowl two overs.
- The players with marbles numbers nine and ten form batting pair “E”
- In the long game, players with marbles numbers nine and ten each bowl three overs
- The players with marbles eleven and twelve form batting pair “F”.
- In the long game, players with marbles numbers eleven and twelve each bowl three overs.

Responsibilities of the Captain

- Meet the umpires
- With the opposing captain, toss for choice of batting or bowling.
- Nominate the order in which batting pairs come to the wicket
- Nominate the order of bowling
- Consult with bowlers on field placement
- Lead applause when the opposing captain comes to the crease
- At the end of the game, lead the team in congratulating the opponents, and in thanking the umpires.

Responsibilities of the Vice-Captain

- Ensure each batting pair is padded-up with safety gear including mouthguards one over before required.
- Cooperate with the scorer to ensure that all team names are correctly recorded in the scorebook.
- Conduct stocktakes of team kit before the game and after the game.

Batting procedure

Each batting pair comes to the wicket together for two overs in the short game or for four overs in the long game. When declared “Out” by the Umpire, the batter remains at the crease, but is debited three runs. No doubt some batters will receive negative totals, but every ball they face offers the potential of improvement. This “three run” debit factor may be varied by the competition organisers, perhaps increasing with the ages of the participants. **All other laws of Cricket apply.**

Conclusion

Under *Doug Darby Rules*, junior cricket will give every youngster an opportunity to learn and exercise the whole range of skills of the great game, plus provide leadership and administrative experience for all.

— *Michael Darby, 2004.*