

Safety Guidelines

Helmets

Any player under the age of 18 playing in the Saracens Hertfordshire Premier Cricket League, County 20/20 or County Trophy matches must wear a helmet when batting and when standing up to the stumps when keeping wicket.

The Umpires must be provided with a team sheet before the start of the match identifying any player who is not yet 18 on the date of the match. Captains, coaches, managers and umpires must always ensure that a young player wears a helmet.

Youth Players in Open Age Cricket

To be eligible to play in Open Age cricket, Youth players must be in Under 13s age group or older and adhere to the following conditions: (Under 13 at midnight on 31st August in the year preceding the current season)

- The Parent/Guardian of an Under 13 must give written permission to their club to play in the Saracens Hertfordshire Cricket League. Form on SHPCL website
- This form must be received by the club prior to registering the player in SHPCL
- This form must be signed by an ECB CA Level Two Coach to verify that the players' development would be enhanced by playing in Open Age cricket
- The Club's Welfare Officer should keep the written permission in a safe place
- SHPCL Committee may, in certain circumstances, ask clubs to provide evidence of a player's written permission

Players in Under 12s County Spring & Summer Squads are also eligible to play, provided conditions above are adhered to.

Where players are required to stand as an umpire, only as a last resort should players aged under 18 umpire any part of a match, unless qualified as an umpire or by agreement between both captains. Where possible, any under 18 umpire should stand only at the striker's end, with an adult at the bowler's end.

Captains' responsibilities

The captain is responsible for the safety of any young players in his team. Captains must ensure young players wear a helmet in adult cricket regardless of the speed of the bowling or the circumstances of the match.

Captains must also ensure when placing their field that young players do not infringe the fielding regulations for young players issued by the ECB.

Responsibility and action of umpires

The umpires should establish before the start of any match the age group of any young players taking part in the match. This will require a meeting with the manager, coach or captain.

When the captain has indicated that there are young players taking part, the umpires should remind the captain that he is responsible for the safety of the young players throughout the match. The umpires should not allow play to proceed if the young player is not wearing a helmet in line with League regulations.

Umpires should also ensure that young players do not infringe the fielding regulations for young players issued by the ECB.

What are the legal implications?

If a young player receives a head injury in a situation where the guidance had not been followed, there is a material risk that the person responsible for the player at the time the injury was sustained would be potentially liable for damages for negligence. In order to establish negligence it would be necessary to show:

- that a person owes the cricketer a duty of care
- that the person acted in breach of that duty of care; and
- that the cricketer suffered loss or damage as a result of that breach.

It will normally be possible to identify who was responsible for the safety of the player at the time the injury was sustained.

Definition of a Young Player

In law a young person is deemed to become an adult at age 18. The law also imposes a duty of care on those responsible for minors (i.e. those under the age of 18). The ECB is recommending that this guidance is followed by all players up to the age of 18.

Fielding Regulations

In line with ECB has regulations covering the minimum fielding distances for young players in all matches where a hard ball is used.

- No young player in the Under 15 age group or younger shall be allowed to field closer than 8 yards (7.3 metres) from the middle stump, except behind the wicket on the off side, until the batsman has played at the ball.
- For players in the Under 13 age group and below the distance is 11 yards (10 metres).
- These minimum distances apply even if the player is wearing a helmet.
- Should a young player in these age groups come within the restricted distance the umpire must stop the game immediately and instruct the fielder to move back.
- In addition any young player in the Under 16 to Under 18 age groups, who has not reached the age of 18, must wear a helmet and, for boys, an abdominal protector (box) when fielding within 6 yards (5.5 metres) of the bat, except behind the wicket on the off side. Players should wear appropriate protective equipment whenever they are fielding in a position where they feel at risk.
- These fielding regulations are applicable to all cricket in England and Wales. Age groups are based on the age of the player at midnight on 31st August in the year preceding the current season.

Safety Measures for Helmets

Players over the age of 18

The ECB strongly recommends that all adult recreational cricketers should wear helmets for certain activities, preferably which meet the most recent British Safety Standard.

This recommendation applies to batting against all types of bowling, wicket-keepers standing up to the wicket (who may as an alternative wear face protectors) and fielders fielding closer than eight yards from the batsman's middle stump, except behind the wicket on the off side.

Under 18s

The position in relation to u18s currently remains unchanged, and is governed by the 'ECB Guidance on the Wearing of Cricket Helmets by Young Players' (www.ecb.co.uk/helmets). In essence, batsmen and wicket-keepers standing up to the stumps must wear head protection when playing or practising. That Guidance should be referred to in full for the position in relation to u18s.

British Safety Standard

The latest British Safety Standard is BS7928:2013 (for both adults and juniors). The full list of helmets meeting this standard is available at www.ecb.co.uk/concussion-in-cricket/helmets. For wicket-keeping face protectors the relevant British Safety Standard is BS7929-2:2009 (again, for both adults and juniors).

Women's Helmets

The ECB understands that there is currently no specific women's helmet and as a consequence no specific standard for women's cricket helmets. As the size of the standard women's cricket ball is between the standard men and junior balls, it is recommended that women use helmets that have been tested against both the men's and junior sized ball, or at least against the junior size ball (as that could potentially get through the gap above the face guard on a men's helmet).

What do Leagues and Clubs need to do?

Whilst it is strongly recommended that all adult recreational cricketers wear helmets in the on-field circumstances detailed above, it is not mandatory for them to do so. For the avoidance of doubt, Leagues or Clubs do not need to go above and beyond the ECB's recommendation by forcing their cricketers to wear helmets.

However, Leagues and Clubs in recreational cricket should ensure that their cricketers are made aware of the ECB's above recommendation in relation to helmets, including the need to check that any newly purchased helmets meet the latest British Safety Standard.

The ECB recommends that Leagues and Clubs bring the link above (i.e www.ecb.co.uk/helmets) to the attention of their cricketers and encourage all cricketers to carefully consider their own health and safety regarding helmet use.

Leagues and Clubs should always ensure that they have adequate public liability insurance.