

Rules for stoolball

The rules for stoolball are easy to learn: similar to but simpler than the laws of cricket. These are the updated rules for 2006-2008. You should read about the [spirit of stoolball](#) too.

1. Teams

A match shall be played between two teams of not more than eleven players. A maximum of six men per team in mixed matches. Each team shall play under a captain, who shall toss a coin for the choice of first innings.

A match is won by the team that scores the most runs within an agreed number of overs. If the final scores of both teams are equal, it is a tie.

2. Umpires

All umpires must be familiar with the rules of stoolball and the umpires' signals.

Before the commencement of a match

Two umpires shall be appointed to control the match with absolute impartiality, strictly in accordance with the rules, and determine the following:

- The fitness of the ground.
- The layout of the wickets and the bowling creases are in accordance with rules 4 and 6 and should, where possible, be on a north to south axis.
- The position of the boundaries (where possible, a maximum of 40 metres or 45 yards from the centre of the wicket) which should be corded or adequately marked with a line and indicator markers. If natural boundaries are used, these should be clearly explained to the umpires and teams before the start of the game.
- The duration of the match, unless previously instructed

Whilst the match is in progress

- The umpires shall continue to monitor the fitness of the ground and playing conditions.
- The umpires shall stand, one at the striker's end approximately 14 to 18 metres (15-20 yards) square of the wicket, well positioned to determine a run out, short run or wicket-keeper infringement (see rule 14) and ready to give an opinion if clarification is sought by the bowler's umpire on wides and no balls. The bowler's umpire, at the non-striker's end, should be well positioned to see the bowling crease and the striker's wicket.
- The umpire shall give an 'out' or 'not out' decision only when appealed to.
- The umpires are the sole judges of fair play and decisions shall be settled by them at their own wicket.
- In the case of any doubt on behalf of either umpire, the other umpire may be consulted. The decision of the bowler's umpire shall be final.
- All players must remain within the limits of the boundary except when fielding the ball, and may not leave or rejoin the field of play without the umpire's permission.
- The agreement of both umpires is required to start the game, suspend the game and re-start the game.

3. Scorers

The scorers, preferably one for each team, should sit together and acknowledge all signals given to them by the umpires. The game shall only progress after both acknowledge the signal.

All runs scored and wickets taken shall be recorded by the scorers and they must agree the score at the end of each over and on completion of each innings.

4. Equipment

Wickets

The wickets shall be the face and all edges of two boards, each 300 mm (1 foot) square and 12 mm (half-inch) thick, mounted on stakes firmly fixed to the ground so that the top of the wicket is level and 1.4 metres (4ft, 8in) from the ground.

- a run shall be added to the score when the umpire calls and signals a no ball or wide and an extra ball shall be bowled (see rules 10 and 11 for runs scored)
- if the ball is struck and runs are completed before the ball crosses the boundary, they will only count if they are in excess of four runs, and then only the runs completed will count
- if, in the event of over-throws, the ball crosses the boundary, the score will be the total of runs completed when the ball crosses the boundary plus four runs.

6. Bowling

The ball shall be bowled underarm, left or right-handed only per over, not thrown or jerked, with both feet behind and within the extended returns of the bowling crease at point of delivery, otherwise the umpire shall call no ball.

The bowling crease shall be at right angles to an imaginary line between the wickets, 900 mm (1 yard) in length, 9.15 metres (10 yards) from the batting wicket and have returns of 300 mm (1 foot) in length at right angles to the bowling crease (see diagram of pitch above).

In mixed matches the bowler must not commence their run-up from any point behind the wicket.

7. Batsman's innings

- The incoming batsman should pass the outgoing batsman on the field of play and, in order to commence their innings, must touch the wicket or stake
- During their innings, both batsmen must remain within reach of their wicket or stake ('in their ground') or they run the risk of being run out by the opposing team. Each time they move out of their ground, ie: while scoring or attempting to score a run, they must return to actively touch the wicket or stake with their bat or hand
- The bowler's umpire must see that the batsman is ready to bat and not allow the bowler to hurry unreasonably between each delivery, giving the bowler a caution if necessary
- A batsman may retire at any time with the consent of the opposing captain, when their innings shall be deemed completed
- In the event of a batsman having to leave the field through injury or illness, the injured batsman's innings may not be resumed until the fall of a wicket
- Exhaustion is not considered an injury or illness
- A player from the same team and of the same sex may act as a runner for an injured batsman and will stand where directed by the umpire
- In mixed matches the batting order shall be male and female to open. When a batsman is out, they are replaced by a batsman of the same sex until there are no more players of that sex to bat, then the remaining batsmen can continue the innings.

8. The Over

- The over shall consist of eight legitimate balls bowled to a wicket.
- At the commencement of each over, the umpire shall call and signal 'play' and the ball shall be deemed to be live.
- When eight legitimate balls have been bowled and the ball has finally settled in the bowler's hands, the umpire shall call and signal 'over'. No balls and wides are not legitimate balls.
- Each over shall be bowled alternately to each wicket.
- Bowlers are not allowed to bowl consecutive overs.
- In mixed matches, a male or female shall bowl alternate overs
- The bowler shall complete an over, unless incapacitated or suspended for unfair bowling. In that event the over should be completed by another team member (and in mixed matches, of the same sex).

9. Dead Ball

The ball shall be regarded as dead when:

- the umpire has called and signalled 'over'
- the umpire has signalled a four or six run boundary
- a batsman is given out

In addition, the umpire shall call 'dead ball' should they decide to intervene during the course of play when:

- a player is injured
- there is a deliberate deflection of the ball by the batsman (see rule 12)
- play is temporarily suspended for any other reason
- play is re-commenced after 'dead ball' has been called and signalled. The umpire shall call and signal 'play' when a new batsman arrives at either wicket.

10. No ball

The ball shall be bowled underarm, not thrown or jerked, with both feet behind and within the extended returns of the bowling crease; otherwise the umpire shall signal and call 'no ball'.

The umpire shall call a 'no ball' if the ball:

- hits the ground before reaching the wicket
- reaches the wicket less than 600 mm (24 inches) above the ground
- would have reached the wicket below 600 mm (24 inches) had the batsman not struck it

A no ball shall also be called in the event of:

- a wicket-keeper infringement (see rule 14)
- dangerous bowling. Dangerous bowling is that which is likely to cause injury to the batsman. The umpire should take into account the batsman's stance at the wicket, and their age and ability.

When a no ball is delivered, the umpire shall call and signal 'no ball' and one run shall be added to the score. The ball shall be recorded as a no ball and an extra ball bowled.

Should the batsman hit a no ball, any resulting runs shall be credited to their score. Any other runs completed as a result of the no ball shall be recorded as no balls.

A batsman cannot be out caught or bowled from a no ball, but may be run out.

11. Wide ball

- If the bowler shall bowl the ball so high or so wide of the wicket and batsman that, in the opinion of the umpire, it is not a legitimate delivery, and has not been hit by the bat or the hand holding the bat, the umpire shall call and signal 'wide ball' as soon as it passes the wicket.
- One run shall be added to the score and recorded as a wide and an extra ball shall be bowled.
- Any runs completed as a result of a wide ball shall be recorded as wides.
- If the striking batsman hits the ball, it ceases to be a wide.

12. Bye

If the bowler bowls a fair delivery, which is not struck by the bat or hand holding the bat and runs are obtained, these shall be recorded as byes and signalled by the umpire accordingly.

In the event of a deliberate deflection of the ball, other than by the bat or hand holding the bat, the umpire shall call 'dead ball' and no runs shall be recorded.

13. The batsman is out

Bowled

The striking batsman is out 'bowled' if the wicket is hit by the ball when the bowler has bowled a legitimate delivery, even if the ball has first touched the bat or hand holding the bat or has been deflected onto the wicket by any part of the batsman's person.

Body before wicket

The striking batsman, having hit the ball or not, is also out 'body before wicket' if, in the opinion of the umpire, the ball bowled would have hit the wicket had it not been prevented from doing so by any part of the batsman's person, other than the hand holding the bat.

Caught

The striking batsman is out 'caught' if the ball, from a stroke off the bat or hand holding the bat, is held in the hand or hands of a member of the fielding team providing that:

- the ball has not touched the ground
- the catcher is inside the boundary when the catch is taken and completed, and remains wholly within the bounds of play
- the ball has not lodged in the clothing of the catcher.

The umpires, batsmen, fielders and wickets are all deemed part of the field of play. In the event that a striking batsman hits a fair ball which is then deflected off an umpire, either batsman, a wicket or fielder(s), resulting in a fielder taking a catch, on appeal, the umpire shall give the batsman out.

Unless the batsmen have crossed before the catch is completed, the non-striker shall return to the wicket where the bowler's umpire is standing, and the new batsman will go to the striker's wicket.

Run out

A batsman shall be deemed 'run out':

- if, in running, or preparing to run, or standing out of their ground whilst the ball is in play, the batsman has not touched the wicket or stake with the bat or hand before the wicket is touched by the ball, thrown or placed, by a member of the fielding team
- if the batsmen have crossed, the batsman who is nearest the wicket that has been struck is out
- a batsman shall be considered out of their ground and may be given run out unless, with bat in hand, the wicket or stake supporting the wicket can be touched
- if a striking injured batsman attempts to run and is run out, they will be ruled 'out' even though the runner has made their ground
- when the bowler is preparing to deliver the ball, should the batsman at the bowler's end be out of their ground, the bowler may attempt to run the batsman out after one warning has been given. This warning must be clearly seen and heard by the umpire. If, after the first warning, another attempt results in the batsman being given out, the ball shall not be counted as a delivery. In the event that the attempt fails and runs result, these runs shall be scored as byes and the ball not counted as a delivery
- if a batsman is standing out of their ground, they cannot be run out unless the ball has first been touched by a fielder before it hits the wicket
- either batsman can be given out by an umpire if, in their opinion, there has been a deliberate attempt to obstruct a member of the fielding side which has prevented a run out being made
- a batsman is not out if, in the opinion of the umpire, they are prevented from touching the wicket or stake by a member of the fielding side.

Hitting the ball twice

The striker is out if the ball is hit twice, unless this is done accidentally.

14. Wicket-keeper

The wicket-keeper shall remain wholly behind the wicket until the ball is delivered by the bowler and:

- touches the bat or person of the striking batsman
- passes or strikes the wicket or support
- the striking batsman attempts to run.

If, in the opinion of the umpire, the wicket-keeper has not remained wholly behind the wicket, a no ball shall be called and signalled.

15. Substitute

A substitute will be allowed, with the permission of the umpires, and the opposing team's captain duly notified, if a player is injured or taken ill during a match. A substitute may not bowl or bat.

16. Lost Ball

In the unlikely event of a ball being lost whilst in the field of play, any member of the fielding side shall call 'lost ball' to the umpire and three runs shall be awarded.

The batsmen shall change ends, so that the striking batsman is at the non-striking end.

17. Misconduct

An umpire may instruct a player to leave the field of play for persistent use of abusive language or unsporting behaviour, and that player may take no further part in the game (see [the spirit of stoolball](#)).