

Junior Players playing in Open Age matches

Introduction

The ECB has issued the following guidance covering the participation of young cricketers in Open Age matches. This guidance applies to boys and girls and any reference to he/his should be interpreted to include she/her. Age groups are based on the age of the player at midnight on 31st August in the year preceding the current season.

Guidance for Clubs and Leagues

All clubs must recognise that they have a duty of care towards all young players who are representing the club. This duty of care also extends to Leagues that allow the participation of young players in adult teams in their League. The duty of care should be interpreted in two ways:

- Not to place a young player in a position that involves an unreasonable risk to that young player, taking account of the circumstances of the match and the relative skills of the player.
- Not to create a situation that places members of the opposing side in a position whereby they cannot play cricket as they would normally do against adult players.

In addition the following specific requirements apply to young players in adult matches:

- All young players who have not reached their 18th birthday must wear a helmet with a faceguard when batting and when standing up to the stumps when keeping wicket. Parental consent not to wear a helmet should not be accepted in adult matches. A young player acting as a runner must also wear a helmet even if the player he is running for is not doing so.

- The current ECB fielding regulations must be adhered to and enforced by the umpires and captain. The umpires are empowered by these fielding regulations to stop the game immediately if a young player comes within the restricted distance.
- The umpires and the opposing captain must be notified of the age group of all players participating in an adult match who are in the Under 19 age group or younger even if the player is not a fast bowler. This requirement also covers any young player taking the field as a substitute fielder. The ECB Team Sheet cards are freely available to facilitate this.
- Any player in the Under 13 age group and younger must have explicit written consent from a parent or guardian before participating in adult matches. Clubs must ensure that their player registration procedures ensure that consent is obtained. The guidance related to changing and showering (see 'Safe Hands' – Cricket's Policy for Safeguarding Children) must be adhered to.
- Any club wishing to play a player in the Under 11 age group in an adult League or Cup match must obtain the explicit prior approval of the League or Cup management before the player can play. Approval should only be given to exceptionally talented players. It is recommended that advice is sought from the County Age Group Coach or other ECB Level 3 coach as appropriate.

Clubs and Leagues can apply more strict restrictions on the participation of young players in adult matches at their discretion. It is strongly recommended that a parent, guardian or other identified responsible adult is present whenever a player in the Under 13 age group or younger plays in an adult match. This could include the captain or other identified adult player taking responsibility for the young player.

This guidance applies to all cricket in England and Wales from the beginning of the 2009 season.