

## ECB Guidelines for Junior Players in Open Age Cricket

The ECB has had several requests to clarify the guidelines issued in December 2009 on junior players in open age cricket.

The intention of merging previous guidance documents was to clarify this area for clubs and leagues to assist them with planning and fulfilling fixtures so as:

- 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 guidelines note the need for clubs and leagues to recognise the positive experience that young players should have in open age cricket and thus clubs should provide an opportunity for players to show their talents in an appropriate way. Children who are just used as fielders will not fully experience the game.

The guidelines are designed to help clubs to decide when to select young players in **open age competitive** cricket and how best to help their cricketing development when they play within open age groups. For example:

Under 12 age group players\* and younger should not play in open age competitive cricket.

Under 13 age group players\* can play in open age group competitive cricket, (i.e. players aged 12 and over) if considered by a qualified Level 2 coach or above that it is appropriate for their development.

Under 13 players will need prior explicit written parental consent to play as this recognises the need for parents or guardians to be aware of the significance of allowing their young child to participate in open age competitive cricket rather than purely junior cricket.

Over 13 year old players are free to play open age cricket.

\*Junior cricket age groups are set by the age of the player on the 31st August preceding the season of play.

These guidelines cover the selection and participation of young players in open age cricket. They designed to help clubs to decide when to select young players in open age cricket and how best to help their cricketing development when they play within open age groups. They apply to boys and girls equally.

### **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 open age groups in their League.

In addition the following specific requirements apply to young players in open age cricket.

1. Making the step up from junior to open age cricket is a significant event in any player's cricket experience. Ensure that the player's safety, personal development needs and overall cricket experience are considered.
2. There is no definitive age at which they should be introduced to open age cricket but determine each case on an individual basis dependent on their ability and stage of cognitive and emotional maturity to take part at this level, taking into account the requirement that no Junior Cricketers younger than the age group of under 13 can play in open age competitive cricket.
3. ECB Fast Bowling Directives and Fielding Regulations should always be adhered to for junior players in open age cricket. All young players who have not reached their 18th birthday must wear a helmet with a faceguard when

batting and either a helmet or faceguard when standing up to the stumps when keeping wicket. A young player acting as a runner must also wear a helmet even if the player they are running for is not doing so.

4. Any player in the Under 13 age group must have explicit written consent from a parent or guardian before participating in open age cricket. Clubs must ensure that their player registration procedures ensure that consent is obtained.
5. Provide an opportunity for players to show their talents in an appropriate way. Children who are just used as fielders will not fully experience the game.
6. Be supportive at all times for all forms of effort even when children are not successful. Try and put them in situations where they will experience some success (however small) and ensure plenty of praise and encouragement.
7. Try and involve them in all aspects of the game wherever possible i.e. socializing, team talks, practice, decision making etc. so that they feel part of the team.
8. Children will often feel more comfortable and able to perform if they have a family member or friend also playing in the side.
9. Remember, children's early experiences will remain with them always and will often determine whether they want to remain playing the game or give up and do something else!
10. Clubs and Leagues can apply more strict restrictions on the participation of young players in open age cricket 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 plays open age cricket. This could include the captain or other identified adult player taking responsibility for the young player.

