

50+ County Championship Competition Rules

1 Title

The title of the Competition shall be the ECB 50+ County Championship for the Brian Aspital Trophy.

2 Management

The control of the Competition shall be delegated to the ECB Competitions Manager in conjunction with the county organisers or their appointed representatives and all decisions relating to these rules or to matches played in the Competition shall be final and binding on all concerned.

3 Entry

- 3.1 The Competition shall be open to the 39 counties with County Boards and the Channel Islands. Only one team may enter from each county.
- 3.2 Counties who participated in the previous year's Competition shall automatically be included in the Competition for the following year unless written notification to the contrary is given by 1st September in the year prior to the Competition. A county wishing to be re-admitted to the Competition must give notice to that effect to the ECB Competitions Manager by 1st September in the year prior to the Competition.
- 3.3 The annual Entrance Fee for each county will be £50 and should be paid to the competition account administered by the ECB.

4 Competition Structure

- 4.1 The Competition shall be organised on a flexible regional basis as decided from time to time by the ECB Competitions Manager in consultation with the county organisers.

- 4.2 Sixteen sides shall qualify for the knock-out stage.
- 4.3 The County Boards shall undertake all match arrangements.
- 4.4 The ECB Competitions Manager shall undertake arrangements for the Final.

5 Qualification of Players

- 5.1 All players must be 50 or over when participating in any match in the Competition.
- 5.2 Players must be bona-fide members of a club situated in the County they are representing and that club must be affiliated to the ECB through the County Board.
- 5.3 Players shall represent only one County in the Competition in any one season.
- 5.4 All players must have been resident in the UK for the two years prior to the commencement of the current season.

6 Cricket Balls

Two new cricket balls of identical make and quality shall be used for all matches in the Competition and will be purchased by the ECB Competitions Manager in conjunction with the appointed representatives of the county organisers. Counties will be required to refund the cost to the competition account administered by the ECB (in 2009 the cost of these balls will be £80 per county).

7 Umpires

- 7.1 Each County Board in conjunction with their local ECB Association of Cricket Officials shall appoint one full ECB ACO member for all Regional Group and Knockout matches. The Home County may appoint both umpires to stand in a Regional Group match by mutual consent between the two counties involved.

7.2 In the Final umpires shall be appointed by the ECB Competitions Manager bearing in mind the Counties involved and geographical and financial considerations.

8 Scorer

Each County Board shall provide a scorer for each match they play.

9 Match Arrangements

9.1 The County drawn at home shall be responsible for all match arrangements and must offer its opponents at least three half-day dates within the dates laid down for each round. The visiting team shall be equally responsible for seeing that fixtures are arranged.

9.2 If a match is cancelled or there is no result due solely to bad weather, every effort shall be made to re-arrange the fixture within the laid down dates. The home side shall, within seven calendar days, provide the opposition, and MUST inform the ECB Competitions Manager, with at least two alternative dates on which the match may be re-arranged. Failure to do so will result in the match being awarded to the other side unless both counties have mutually agreed not to re-arrange the match because of insufficient time. When a match is abandoned for the second occasion, counties shall have the option of mutually agreeing a further date, within the laid-down time-scale for that round, or, in the event of no agreement to re-arrange, the match shall be declared a 'no result'. If it is not possible to re-arrange a match within the laid-down dates due to the time-scale, the match shall be declared a 'no result'.

9.3 First Knockout Round, Quarter-Final and Semi-Final matches

Matches in these three rounds will be played on the designated dates, if laid down, unless both counties mutually agree to play on another date, which is no later than the designated closing date for the round. Matches where no result is achieved, due to bad weather, can be re-arranged, providing the re-arranged match is played on or before the designated closing date for the round.

10 Match Results

10.1 At the end of each match both scorers shall sign an official result sheet and the Home County shall return this to the ECB Cricket Department within 48 hours.

10.2 It is the responsibility of the WINNING side to enter the result and full scorecard details onto the appropriate site on Play-Cricket.com within 48 hours of the match being completed. The losing side should confirm that the summary result has been correctly entered. Both sides must ensure that their squad details have been entered into Play-Cricket prior to each match they play.

Playing Conditions

The Laws of Cricket (2000 Code 3rd Edition – 2008) shall apply with the following exceptions:-

1 Hours of Play

- 1.1 All matches in the Competition other than the Final shall commence at 1.00p.m. unless mutually agreed otherwise by the two teams in any one match.
- 1.2 The Tea Interval, which will normally be taken between innings, shall be of twenty minutes duration. In interrupted or delayed matches, the Tea Interval may be waived with the agreement of both Captains or taken prior to the start of play. Captains and umpires must agree before play commences the latest time at which play can finish to allow subsequent changes in the number of overs, should play be interrupted by bad weather. In the event of agreement not being reached, Close of Play shall be 7.30p.m.

2 Length of Innings

Each team shall bat for 45 overs unless all out earlier. In matches where the start is delayed or play is suspended:-

- 2.1 The object shall always be to re-arrange the number of overs so that both teams have the opportunity of batting for the same number of overs. Overs still to be bowled shall be based on an average rate of 18 overs per hour (one over per 3 minutes, 20 seconds or part thereof) in the time remaining before Close of Play (See 1.2.).
- 2.2 If the number of overs of the side batting first is reduced, no fixed time will be specified for the close of their innings.

- 2.3 If, owing to a suspension of play during the innings of the side batting second, it is not possible for that team to have the opportunity of batting for the same number of overs as the team batting first, they will bat for a number of overs to be calculated as in 2.1.
- 2.4 The team batting second shall not bat for a greater number of overs than the first team, unless the latter has been all out in less than the agreed number of overs.
- 2.5 The minimum length of a match shall be twenty overs per side unless a result has been achieved earlier. This Playing Condition can be over-ruled by 9.1 in the case of matches played in the Knockout stages of the Competition.

N.B. Umpires shall notify all concerned of the time of resumption of play following delay or suspension, immediately they have reached a decision. The umpires shall be responsible for calculating the revised number of overs to be played in the match and for notifying the decision immediately to all concerned.

3 The Result

- 3.1 A result can be achieved only if both teams have batted for at least 20 overs unless one team has been all out in less than 20 overs or unless the team batting second scores enough runs to win in less than 20 overs. All other matches in which one or both teams have not had the opportunity of batting for a minimum of 20 overs shall be declared 'no result' matches and will be subject to Playing Condition 8.2.
- 3.2 In matches in which both teams have had the opportunity of batting for the agreed number of overs (i.e. 45 overs each in an uninterrupted match, or a lesser number of overs in an interrupted match), the team scoring the higher number of runs shall be the winner. If the scores are equal, the team who have taken the greater number of wickets shall be the winner. If still equal, the winner shall be decided as follows:-

3.2.1 45 overs-a-side match

The team with the higher score at the end of the 44th over (providing both teams have received 44 overs), if still equal, at the end of the 43rd over (providing both teams have received 43 overs) and so on, until a winner is decided.

3.2.2 Reduced, but equal overs-a-side match

The team with the higher score at the end of the penultimate over and so on, until a winner is decided.

3.2.3 Both sides dismissed in 45 overs-a-side or reduced, but equal overs-a-side match

If both sides are all out, the side with the higher overall scoring rate shall be the winner. If still equal, the winner shall be the side with the highest score after 40 overs, or if still equal, after 30 overs, or if still equal, after 20 overs, or if still equal, after 10 overs.

3.3 If the team batting second has not had the opportunity to complete the agreed number of overs, and has neither been all out, nor has passed its opponent's score, the following shall apply:-

3.3.1 If the match is abandoned, the result shall be decided on the average run-rate throughout both innings.

3.3.2 If, due to suspension of play, the number of overs in the innings of the side batting second is revised, their target score shall be calculated by multiplying the reduced number of overs by the average runs scored by the side batting first.

3.4 In the event of the team batting first being all out in less than their full quota of overs, the calculation of their run-rate shall be based on the full quota of overs to which they would have been entitled and shall apply only where the team batting second has not had the opportunity to bat for the agreed number of overs.

4 Number of Overs Per Bowler

- 4.1 No bowler may bowl more than nine overs, however, in a delayed start or interrupted match, where the overs are reduced for both sides or for the side bowling second, no bowler may bowl more than one-fifth of the total overs allowed (unless such a number has been exceeded before the interruption), except that where the total overs are not divisible by five, an additional over shall be allowed to the minimum number of bowlers necessary to make up the balance – e.g. after 16 overs, rain interrupts play and the innings is reduced to 32 overs. Both opening bowlers have bowled 8 overs. Two bowlers can bowl 7 overs and three bowlers can bowl 6. Bowlers one and two have already exceeded this limit. They count as the two bowlers who were allowed the extra over (7 as opposed to 6) and so other bowlers are limited to 6 overs.

When an interruption occurs mid-over and on resumption the bowler has exceeded the new maximum allocation, he will be allowed to finish the incomplete over.

In the event of a bowler breaking down and being unable to complete an over, another bowler will bowl the remaining balls. Such part of an over will count as a full over only in so far as each bowler's limit is concerned.

5 Law 14 – Declarations

Law 14 will not apply in this competition. The captain of the batting side may not declare his innings closed at any time during the course of the match.

6 Law 25 – Wide Ball – Judging a Wide Ball

In addition to Law 25 the following will apply.

Umpires are instructed to apply a very strict and consistent interpretation in regard to this Law in order to prevent negative bowling wide of the wicket.

Any offside or legside delivery which in the opinion of the umpire does not give the batsman a reasonable opportunity to score shall be called a wide. For guidance purposes, a legside wide should be called if a ball passes on the legside outside the pads of the batsman standing in a normal guard position.

7 Restriction on Placement of Fieldsmen

- 7.1 Two semi-circles shall be drawn on the field of play. The semi-circles shall have as their centre the middle stump at each end of the pitch. The radius of each of the semi-circles shall be 30 yards (27.4 metres). The ends of each semi-circle shall be joined to the other by a straight line drawn on the field on the same side of the pitch. The field restriction area should be marked by painted white 'dots' at five yard intervals, each 'dot' to be covered by a white plastic or rubber (but not metal) disc measuring seven inches in diameter.
- 7.2 At the instant of delivery, there may not be more than five fielders on the leg side.
- 7.3 For the duration of the innings only five fielders are permitted to be outside the field restriction marking at the instant of delivery.
- 7.4 In the event of an infringement of the above fielding restrictions, the umpire at the striker's end shall call and signal 'No Ball'.

8 Points scoring system for Regional Group matches

- 8.1 The team winning the match shall score two points.
- 8.2 In a 'no result' match, that is a match in which no result is achieved solely due to bad weather, each team shall score one point.
- 8.3 In the event of two or more teams in any Regional Group having an equal number of points, their overall positions in the table shall be based on the result(s) of the Group match(es) between the sides.

- 8.4 If still equal, the team with the higher net run rate in the Group matches in which a result was achieved will be placed in the higher position. A team's net run rate is calculated by deducting from the average runs per over scored by that team, the average runs per over scored against that team. The calculation of average runs shall be total runs scored x 100 divided by legitimate balls received. In the event of a team being all out in less than its full quota of overs, the calculation of its net run rate shall be based on the full quota of overs to which it would have been entitled and not the number of overs in which it was dismissed.
- 8.5 In the event of any team not fulfilling a fixture for any reason other than weather, they will be deemed to have conceded and therefore lost the match and they will also have deemed to have bowled 45 overs (270 balls) and taken 0 wickets for the purposes of the calculation in 8.4.
- 8.6 The five group winners, five runners-up and five third placed counties in each group will automatically go forward into the First Knockout Round. The fourth placed county with the best record will automatically qualify for the First Knockout Round. This will be determined first by the county with the best playing record, (i.e. a county with more wins will be better than one with less wins), and, if more than one county has an equal record, the best record will be the best overall average as calculated in 8.4.

9 First Knockout Round, Quarter-final and Semi-final Matches

- 9.1 Where a Knockout match has started and, due to an interruption there is no longer the opportunity for both sides to face a minimum of 20 overs, if time allows, the original match will be abandoned and a new match of not less than 10 overs per side will commence. A result can only be achieved in a match of less than 20 overs per side if both sides have the opportunity to bat for the full number of overs originally allocated at the start of the new match.

9.2.1 If a result cannot be achieved by the designated closing date for the round, the winners of the tie will be decided by a 'bowl-out' or the toss of a coin.

9.2.2 Bowl-Outs

In the event of no result being obtained by other methods and where there is no reserve date on which to play the game, a bowl-out (outdoors or indoors) will take place to achieve a result. Five players from each side will bowl two overarm deliveries each at a wicket (conforming to Law 8) from a wicket pitched at a distance of 22 yards with, if practicable, bowling, popping and return creases marked (conforming to Law 9). The side, which bowls down the wicket (as defined in Law 28.1a) the most times, shall be the winner. If the scores are equal, the same players will bowl one ball each alternately to achieve a result on a 'sudden death' basis.

The following shall also apply in respect of bowl-outs:

9.2.3 The same suitably acceptable ball (not a new one) will be used by both teams. If this ball becomes wet, it may be changed subject to the umpires' approval.

9.2.4 If a bowler bowls a No ball it will count as one of the two deliveries but will not count towards the score of the team.

9.2.5 If the original match has started, then the five cricketers nominated to take part in the bowl-out must be chosen from the eleven cricketers and 12th man selected to play in the match. If there has been no play in the original match (the toss has not taken place), the five cricketers may be selected from any of the players in the squad as registered on Play-Cricket.

9.2.6 Each side will appoint a wicket-keeper to stand behind the wicket but out of reach of the stumps.

9.3 The five group winners and the best three runners-up shall receive a home tie in the First Knockout Round. The best three runners-up shall be determined as in 8.5 (as for the fourth best county in the First Knockout Round). No two counties from the same group shall meet in the First Knockout Round.

10 Final

Arrangements for the Final shall be made by the ECB Competitions Manager. In the event of a no result match and no agreement by both counties as to a replay the trophy shall be shared.