

IX.—The bowler changing wickets twice during an innings, means his going to the other end to that from which he has been bowling, and then returning to it, and there is thus given to him the opportunity to bowl four overs out of five. He can deliver an over at one end, then change wickets and deliver from the other end, then wait while another over is being bowled, and then go on in turn with his over, change to his original end, and bowl the over following, thus in first-class matches sending in eight successive balls twice in an innings! I think it would be a very good thing if this rule were altered, so as to allow the bowler to change ends as often as he liked, provided that he never bowled two successive overs.

X.—This rule, about the understanding of which there is little difficulty, ought to be strictly enforced; but owing to the weak-mindedness of the umpires of the present day it rarely is, and many bowlers, or rather throwers, are allowed to infringe it with impunity. The umpires own that the men throw, but have not the courage to speak out and “no ball” them. The matter ought really to be taken up at head-quarters, and orders given to the umpires to enforce the law. A jerk can be detected by the blow of the arm against the side as it is made. “No ball” should be called the instant the ball leaves the bowler’s hand.

XI.—“During the over” might be added with advantage to this rule. The bowler, to prevent the batsman getting in his way, may direct him to stand which side he pleases, so as to have room to bowl, but of course it would not be fair to make him change his place every ball. Law XXXVI. would meet such cases as this.

XII.—It is on the batsman that the fact of a ball being wide principally depends; what is wide to one may not be so to another. It sometimes pays to bowl wides to entice the striker to hit at them and give catches. Wides can be run for the same as byes, but of course there is no object in running a single unless to change the batsmen, as one is scored without quitting the wicket.

XIII.—Running for wides and no balls is optional, and there is seldom an object in crossing if there is only a chance of a single. Should, however, a no ball be hit, and a run made, the run counts to the striker. A man can only be out by running out from a no ball, but I once witnessed a curious incident in which a man bowled a no ball and the striker ran out of his ground, and just touched the ball, which went into the wicket-keeper’s hand, who put down the wicket, and the man was out—“run out.” A hard case for the striker, for had he simply missed the ball he could not have been stumped. It would be well if something was said in the rule about the man being out only in the event of his attempting a run.

XIV.—The words “trial ball” in this rule do not mean that a man should not bowl a ball to get the stiffness off his muscles, but that a bowler should not bowl down on the wicket.

XV.—This rule is rather vague. For instance, supposing the bails are blown off (as occasionally occurs if playing goes on in a boisterous wind), and are off just as the bowler delivers the ball, and the ball hits the wicket but does not take the stump out of the ground, the man, owing to the bails not being on the stumps, is “not out.” Rule XXXVI. gives the umpire power to act sensibly in the matter, though I have known a case where the man was given in, and correctly so according to the strict letter of this rule, there being nothing mentioned to meet the case, which is by no means exceptional. The rule could easily be worded so as to be applicable under all circumstances—its intention is obvious enough.

XVI.—If a ball is caught off a tree, or a house, or such like, the striker is out unless it has previously been agreed that such tree, etc., is not in the ground. The rule was never meant to imply that the batsman should be out owing to the ball lodging in a tree or a gutter and being fetched down by a fieldsmen. It is much the best plan, where there are trees or other obstacles in the ground, for the two sides to agree before the match commences that cases such as we have noted should be not out. If

a man hits a ball and it only touches a leaf or so, and its progress is not impeded thereby, he is of course out if caught. If the hand in catching the ball touches the ground it makes no difference, the man being out so long as the ball itself has not touched it.

XVII.—Part of your foot or the bat should be grounded within the popping-crease; the striker is out if he is on the line and no part of his foot or bat inside it. Should a man in making a run jump in the air just before he reaches the crease, in order to avoid being hit by the ball, and the ball hits the wicket before he touches the ground, although he may be well over the crease, he is out. Again, should he reach his ground and then jump up, and the ball hit the wicket while he is in the air, he is out, although some umpires would decide to the contrary. The rule was not made to meet such a case, but as it stands it leaves no doubt in the matter; giving the man out would, however, be against the spirit of the law.

XVIII.—This rule says the man is out if he hits down his wicket, but says nothing about the bails, though, of course, if a bail is dislodged the man is out. If the striker hits the ball into his partner’s wicket, the latter is not out unless he is out of his ground and the ball is touched by one of the field on its road from the bat. It is only in striking at the ball, not in running, that a man can be out for hitting the wicket.

XIX.—This rule is not generally understood. I have known an umpire give the man out who ran against a fieldsmen and prevented him catching a ball which his partner had hit. This was a wrong decision; the rule says distinctly the “striker” is out, the reason being that had the fielder not been interfered with he would have probably caught the ball, and the striker would have been out—caught out. The rule is, of course, against wilful obstruction, and not only includes knocking up against the fieldsmen, but yelling and hooting so as to confuse him. In all such cases let it be borne in mind that the “striker” is out.

XX.—Wilfully striking the ball again does not mean preventing its rebounding into his wicket, but hitting it so as to score off it.

XXI.—The wicket-keeper must knock down the wicket with the hand that the ball is in. It matters not if the bat is dropped so long as the batsman gets into his ground. There is no advantage in dropping the bat, for though you may run lighter you have to run farther, as, instead of reaching out and touching the ground, you have to run over the crease each time. The question often arises, “If a man can be put out without extracting a stump, should one bail be off?” Of course he can, as the rule says if both bails are off. If a stump is pulled up to make a man out after the bails are off, it must be done by the hands or hand in which the ball is, and it does not do to pull up the stump with one hand while the ball is in the other, and then knock them together—a thing which has been done, though no one would think so, in a first-class match.

(To be continued.)

ENGLAND

In a match Yorkshire v. Gloucester, the former made 112 and 148, the latter 120 and 109. Peate bowled E. M. and W. G. Grace for 0 the first innings; the second they made 13 and 56 respectively.

A noteworthy fact for cricket coincidentists is that precisely the same large score, namely 117, was made in two places on July 31st—by Mr. W. W. Read, at the Oval for Surrey, and by Flowers at Cambridge for M.C.C.

The Australian cricketers propose to journey home by way of America, and in all probability matches will be arranged on their behalf at Philadelphia and New York, as well as perhaps at Detroit. On their return to Australia they will play the Hon. Ivo Bligh’s English Eleven twice, at Melbourne on January 1, and at Adelaide on 26th of same month. There is every chance also of their meeting Fifteen of South Australia at Adelaide.