



*The*  
**Cricket**  
**Handbook**

*Clontarf Cricket Club*





# *The.* **Cricket Handbook**

## ***Introduction***

The purpose of this handbook is to act as a reference guide for the kids to help them on their cricket learning path.

The handbook starts off with quick reference guide of field positions and some key checks to act as reminders before batting, bowling & fielding.

The handbook finishes with some lessons on some key skill attributes the kids need to learn or think about on their way to becoming senior cricketers at Clontarf Cricket Club.

Hopefully your child gets some benefit out of this handbook.

*Clontarf Cricket Management*



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**bmc design**

*Special thanks to Brendan McCarthy*  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Spirit of Cricket.....	05
Field Positions.....	06
Checklists - Batting/Bowling/Fielding.....	08
Batting.....	11
Bowling.....	19
Fielding .....	27
Death over tactics - Spin.....	33
Death over tactics - Pace.....	34
Resilience.....	35





## *The spirit of cricket*

Cricket owes much of its appeal and enjoyment to the fact that it should be played not only according to the Laws, but also within the Spirit of Cricket. The major responsibility for ensuring fair play rests with the captains, but extends to all players, match officials and, especially in junior cricket, teachers, coaches, and parents. Respect is central to the Spirit of Cricket.

1. Respect your captain, team-mates, opponents, and the authority of the umpires.
2. Play hard and play fair.
3. Accept the umpire's decision.
4. Create a positive atmosphere by your own conduct and encourage others to do likewise.
5. Show self-discipline, even when things go against you.
6. Congratulate the opposition on their successes and enjoy those of your own team.
7. Thank the officials and your opposition at the end of the match, whatever the result.

Cricket is an exciting game that encourages leadership, friendship, and teamwork, which brings together people from different nationalities, cultures, and religions, especially when played within the Spirit of Cricket.

Question for you? How do you make your teammates feel when you speak? If it doesn't make them feel better/ Stronger/happier then perhaps it's not worth saying.

***At Clontarf CC we build each other up -  
we're stronger when we pull together.***

## Fielding positions for a right handed batsman



*Off side*

*On (leg) side*

### Legends

- Mandatory fielders: Bowler and Wicket-keeper (Wk)
- Traditional primary position of the region
- Variations of/ additions to the primary position
- Umpire (U) and Square Leg Umpire (Sq L U)
- Batsmen - Striking (S), Non-Striking (NS), Runner (R)
- ⋯⋯ Approximate Regions
- - 30-yard circle
- Boundary

### Glossary

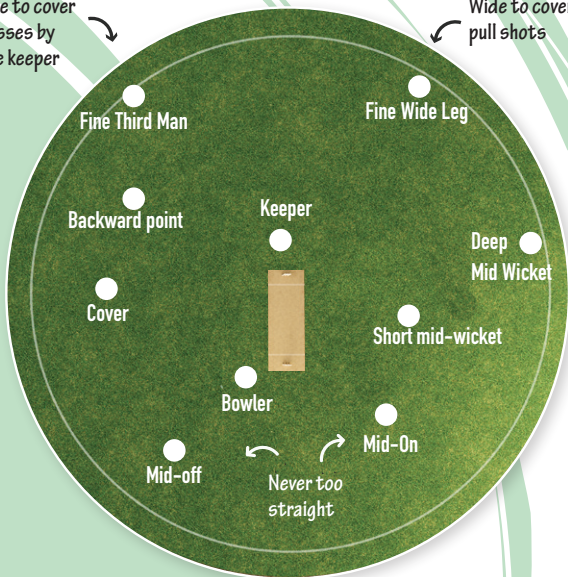
- Short:** nearer batsman
- Silly:** very near batsman
- Deep:** further from batsman
- Wide:** further from line of pitch
- Fine:** straight: nearer line of pitch
- Square:** near(er) line of batsman's crease
- Backward:** behind batsman's crease
- Forward:** in front of batsman's crease



## Fielding positions - Regulation field

Fine to cover misses by the keeper

Wide to cover pull shots



### Boundary fielders

Stay on the line. Your job is to stop 4's and 2's. Batters will always be able to get 1 to you.

### Ring fielders

Your job is to save 1's. Be aggressive and attack the ball. Go for run outs, it's your team mates' job to back up your throw.

## **Batters checklist**

### **1. Talk to your partner**

- Agree that you're going to call loud.
- Both are going to back each other up.
- Listen to who is bowling well
- Is the ball swinging? Which way?

### **2. Understand the field**

- Are they fielding close? Difficult to get 1's
- Are they fielding deep? Easy to get off the mark.
- Where are their best fielders? Don't take them on.

### **3. How can you tip and run to get off zero?**

4. Where are the boundary options? Where is protected and where isn't.

### **5. Take your time.**

- You don't have to hit your first ball for 6. Watch your first ball very carefully onto your bat.
- Defend your stumps.

### **6. Move your feet. Step to the ball**

### **7. Keep communicating with/helping your partner**



### ***Bowlers checklist***

1. **Before you start running in**
  - Check your fielders are where you want them.
  - Are the boundary fielders where you set them? Have they drifted?
2. Pick your target where you want to land the ball. Keep looking at the target, nothing else...Not the keeper or the front foot line.
3. Bowl the ball into the pitch.
4. Follow through
5. The only thing that matters is the next ball. If something went wrong with your last ball, then forget about it. You can't change the past. Think about it being your wicket that changes the game.
6. Attack the stumps.

## *Fielding Checklist*

1. Good tight fielding to stop runs
2. Backing up throws at the stumps
3. Bowlers following through after delivery with an eye on the ball ready for a caught & bowled or stopping runs
4. Bowler getting back quickly behind the stumps
5. Positive team encouragement chat
6. Walking in with the bowler
7. Watch for the batters' stronger shots and put a fielder there on the boundary rope to defend.

All of the above if done together can cause the over rate to increase and put more pressure on the batter. It's a very important tactic for the fielding team to create but it's only done when everyone on the field is focussed on their role.

## *Wicket keeper checklist*

1. Switch off after every ball but have trigger to switch back on.
2. Watch the bowler from the start of their run up. Take a step or two in to focus on the ball as the bowler is running in.
3. **When crouching make sure:**
  - Your hands are together and finger tips are on the ground.
  - Your weight is forward slightly so you're on your toes.
4. **Make sure when standing up make sure:**
  - The heel of your hands are together and at knee height, if not lower.

## Batting



## *Taking Guard*

### **Middle Stump Guard**

If in doubt, it can be a good idea to start out by taking a middle stump guard.

Pros for Middle Stump Guard include:

- You have both the middle and leg stumps covered by the bat as the ball is bowled. Any delivery heading for those stumps can be dealt with more competently.
- Focuses on leg side play.
- Middle is also a good starting point for young players who are learning the game.

Cons Against Middle Stump Guard include:

- Higher chance of getting out with LBW, since your legs actually cover two of the three wickets.

### **Leg Stump Guard**

Pros for Leg Stump Guard include:

- Better judgement with deliveries that are outside off stump.
- Also focuses on leg side play, thus lower likelihood of getting out with LBW.

Cons Against Leg Stump Guard include:

- Many bowlers will look to send the ball into the 'channel' outside that off stump as they look for an edge to the wicket keeper or slips.

### **Middle and Leg Stump Guard**

Middle and leg will be situated exactly halfway between the middle stump and the leg stump. It's also referred to as two

legs and most batters will say 'two please' when they ask the umpire for their guard.

Slightly taller players have this option if they want their eye above the off stump when the ball is delivered. It's all about personal preference, however, so why not test out middle and leg in the nets.

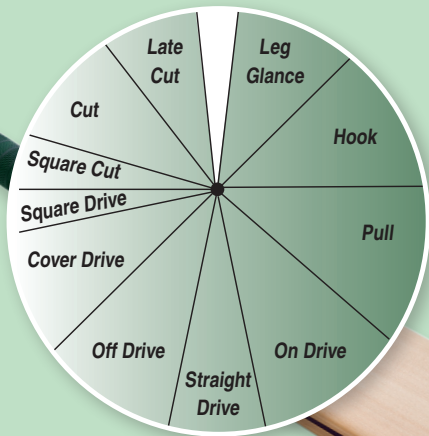
### Pros for Middle and Leg Guard include:

- Ideal for taller players.
- A balanced combination of both guards with enough move to play on both sides.

### Cons Against Middle and Leg Guard include:

- Medium chance of getting out with LBW.

## Shots



## Shot Selection

The batter has approximately 12 shots to choose from either side of the wicket. Stroke selection depends on the line, length and speed of a delivery.

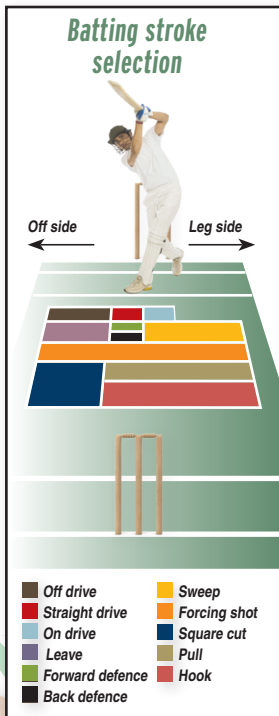
There are three main lines:

1. Off stump and outside
2. Middle stump
3. Leg stump and outside

And there are five main lengths of delivery:

1. Bouncer/long hop
2. Short of a length
3. Good length
4. Full length/half volley
5. Full toss

For the best chance of building an innings, a batter needs to move their feet backwards or forwards to get into the best position to play a stroke.





For the first few balls or until the batter has their eye in it's a good idea to play in the 'V' area from the batter view. Try and only play shots between mid-on and mid-off it requires that shots are played with a straight bat, the full face of the bat shown to the bowler, meaning less chance of getting an edge. Aim to hit the ball between mid-on and mid-off and leave the wide ones unless you're certain you can play them safely. Go chasing a wide ball for a cover drive and an edge is more likely than a four as it swings away towards the slips. A flick through mid-wicket can find a leading edge spooning up to the bowler as the ball straightens from leg stump.

### *Back Foot Shots*

A shorter length delivery where the ball bounces up to your waist or higher shots will usually be played on the back foot.

**The main back foot shots are:**

1. Hook shot
2. Pull shot
3. Square cut
4. Back defence

The hook, pull and square cut are cross-batted shots where the arms are fully extended for maximum power.

The hook and pull are usually played to deliveries on middle and leg stump, while the square cut is played to a ball outside off stump.

## *Back Foot Shots*

A fuller length delivery will normally be played on the front foot.

**The main front foot shots are:**

1. Off drive
2. Straight drive
3. On drive
4. Sweep shot
5. Forward defence


The off and straight drive are played to deliveries which pitch on off stump and outside, while the on drive is played to a ball pitching around leg stump.

The sweep shot is played to a ball from a spinner pitching around leg stump and outside.

## *Running between the wickets*

Running between the wickets requires two people to be in sync with each other. Calling is the first and possibly the most important step in the process. There are set calls that must be made and they should leave your batting partner in no doubt as to what they should do: They are the only calls we make

- **Yes:** There is a run available
- **No:** Stay in the crease – the fielder has collected the ball and you shouldn't run
- **Wait:** Be ready to run: The ball is approaching a fielder but there could be a run if they do not collect it cleanly. Follow up a 'wait' call with a 'yes' or 'no'.



*A run is never  
worth a wicket.  
If in doubt,  
don't run!*

The striker calls for a ball hit in front of the wicket. The non-striker calls for a ball hit behind. After the first run, it is for the man running into danger to call.

Run every run as fast as possible, but particularly the first one. At the end of each run even if you think another run is unlikely, always turn to look for another. As the Batters cross for a run the batter who can see the ball should communicate whether they think any more runs are possible, “Maybe 2” etc. Always be aware of where the ball is. Watch it if possible.

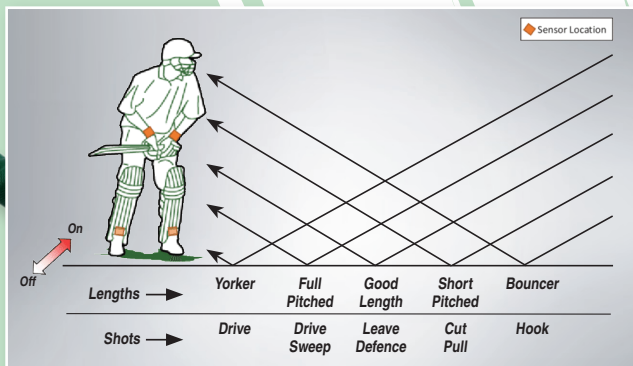
Change the bat from right hand to left etc., so that as you touch the bat down, you can look up to see the fieldsman (rather than have to turn round). Do not keep looking as you run. it slows you down.

Do not commit yourself to a run until the caller has called YES!

## Length

The length of a delivery refers to how close the ball is to the batter when it makes contact with the pitch. If the bowler aims to bounce the ball next to the batter's feet, then this is said to be a very full length.

If the bowler wants to bowl a bouncer and whacks the ball into the pitch about halfway between themselves and the batter, this is a shorter length delivery.



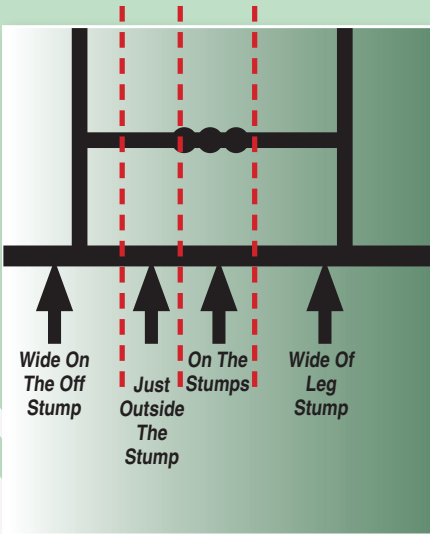
## Bowling



## Line

The line of a delivery refers to the direction in which the bowler has bowled the ball. If the bowler delivers the ball towards the off stump, then this delivery is said to be on an off-stump line.

If the bowler bowls the ball very wide of the batter's off stump, then this ball would be following a much wider line



A basic breakdown of the lines a bowler can bowl to a right handed batsman

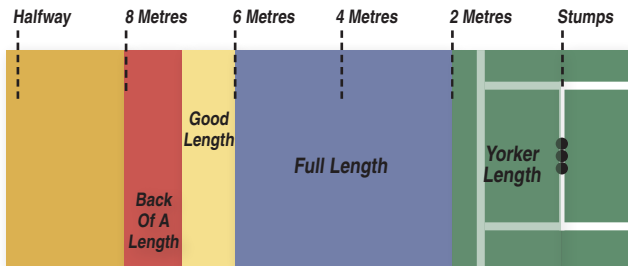
## What is the best line & length to bowl?

### Fast Bowlers

1. Attack the stumps
2. If you've been watching cricket a while, you might have heard people talk about how a bowler is putting the ball in 'the corridor of uncertainty' or something similar. This mythical cricket phrase refers to the ideal line of a delivery for a fast bowler, which is on the off-stump or just outside it.

### Spin Bowlers

1. The ideal line for a spin bowler to bowl depends on,
  - The direction that the ball is spinning
  - The amount that the ball is spinning
2. If you are a spin bowler that is spinning the ball in towards the body of the batter, then you should look to



Distance will vary depending on the speed of the bowler.  
At Clontarf we aim to bowl full length & hitting the stumps.

bowl a line that is outside the off stump. This ensures that when the ball turns, it does not go too far towards the leg side, allowing the batter to easily whip the ball off their pads for runs. If you are spinning the ball away from the body of the batter, you may choose to land the ball on the line of off stump or middle stump. This means that when the ball hits the pitch it should spin past the off stump!

3. If the ball is spinning very aggressively, then a bowler that is spinning the ball towards the body of the batter should bowl a lot wider of the off stump. Bowlers who spin the ball away from the body of the batter can now pitch the ball closer to the leg stump, because it will spin more aggressively towards the offside. If the ball is not spinning much at all, both types of spin bowlers should bowl a line closer to the off stump



## *Other effects on line & length*

### **The Bounce of The Pitch**

Some pitches bounce more than others, so this means a bowler will have to adjust their length to compensate for this difference! On a very bouncy pitch, bowlers will be able to move their lengths a bit closer to the batter, because bowling their usual length on a pitch like this will lead to their deliveries getting a bit too high. On pitches that don't offer a lot of bounce, bowlers may have to dig the ball into the pitch a bit shorter in order to get it up around the top of the off stump.

### **The Height of The Bowler**

Taller bowlers will naturally be able to get the ball to bounce more than shorter bowlers. Therefore, a taller bowler will be able to push the ball a bit closer to the bat and still achieve the same amount of bounce as a smaller bowler would when bowling a shorter length!

### **The Age of The Ball**

At the start of a match when the ball is new, it is harder and it will bounce higher and zip through fast. As the game goes on, the ball gets older and softer, and bowlers will struggle to get it to bounce as high. Therefore, with the older ball, bowlers may have to adjust their length and bowl a bit fuller as it might 'sit up' more after it bounces.



## The Speed of The Bowler

Slower bowlers should aim to pitch the ball a bit closer to the batter than quicker bowlers. This is because slower bowlers may not have the pace to get the ball to carry through to the wicket keeper if they bowl too short! This is especially true for young bowlers. The ideal length of fast bowling for youngsters will be closer to the bat than the 6-7 metres that I mentioned earlier in this post!

## *Bowling Tips*

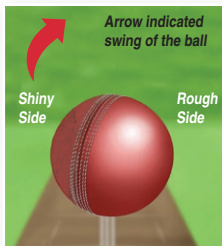
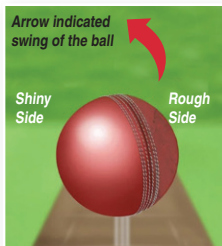
### Try to avoid bowling

- Too wide of off stump. It will give the batter width to have a low-risk swing at the ball.
- Down leg side. These can be hit for easy runs and leg side hits. Young players tend to be stronger hitting to leg. Plus, too far to the leg side you can concede wide runs.

### Variations

- Slower ball. Pitched up slightly can put the batter off who already has their eye in.
- Yorker. Used occasionally are difficult to hit plus a wicket taking option. Used with slower balls to stop slogging across the line.
- Bouncer. If the bowler is quick enough then occasionally against a front foot batter who thinks everything is going to be pitched up.

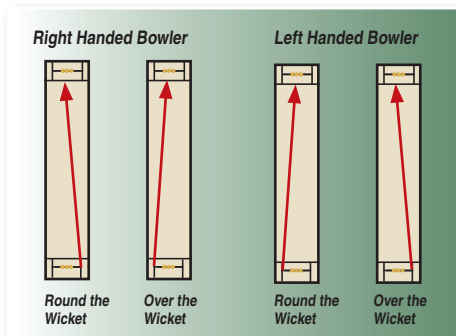
## Swing Bowling



Point the seam in the direction you wish to swing the ball.

## Using the Width of The Crease

Try and upset the batter rhythm by using the full width of the crease. This is done by changing the round or over the wicket but make sure you vary the width of the return crease markings to change the angle as much as possible.



Remember when wide of the crease you'll need to aim slightly wider than you normally do.



# Fielding



## *Field Setting*

The captain needs to think about what can affect the field placement,

1. Match situation attacking/defending
2. Type of bowling pace/leg or off spin
3. Pitch conditions
4. Accuracy of the bowler
5. Swing and seam movement
6. Batters style & limitations

If a bowler is hitting their line and length to the top of off stump then most batter will play the traditional 'V' area in front of themselves using cover, straight and on drives and so field placement needs to stop these and edges. Some standard fielding positions are,

- Mid On & Mid Off to cover straight drives
- 3rd Man & Fine Leg stop edges
- Extra Cover & Mid-Wicket to stop wider drives.

### *Examples of Field Settings*

Attacking with fast bowler on a fast pitch with plenty of bounce. If you had the regulation six fielders above, then you could put the spare three in two Slips and a Gulley. If you were going for wickets, then 3rd Man and Fine Leg could come up for catching in Extra Slip and Leg Slip.

If a batter plays with an open face of their bat, you may consider cutting off their square shots with a Gulley and a Square 3rd Man especially if the bowler is out swinging the ball.



### *Walking in with the Bowler*

As a fielder, unless you are the keeper or in the slips, you should be walking in toward the batter as the bowler runs into bowl.

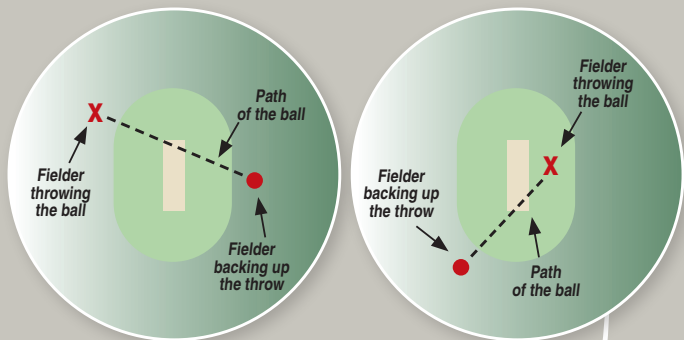
You should mark a spot on the field and take 4-5 steps toward the batter as the bowler gets near the crease to bowl.

This helps you react quicker to a shot the batter plays and gives you a better chance to stop the ball and save runs or take a catch.

If you are slips, you don't walk in, but crouch with your hands out in front of you in position as the other fielders are walking in.

## Backing Up

When a fielder throws a ball at the stumps to try and cause a wicket from a run out the Bowler/Wicket Keeper stand behind the stumps to help catch the ball if it's not a direct hit. To save runs a fielder must back them up in case of a bad throw. See below as an example.



## Catching

You should choose which position to put your hands in based on the height of the ball when it reaches you. The basic rules to stick to are as follows:

If the ball is above the height of your stomach when it reaches you, you should be taking the catch using the reverse cup method, with your fingers pointing towards the sky. If you need to, you can bend your knees slightly and crouch to make this an even more comfortable catch.





If the ball is below the height of your stomach when it reaches you, you should be taking the catch using the orthodox cup method, with your fingers pointing down towards the ground.

### *Tips For Some Fielding Positions*

#### **Slips**

Use fielders with the best hand eye coordination. If batter is dominating move slips fielders to defensive fielding positions. If bowling spin slips are rarely used.

#### **Leg Slip**

If a spinner is bowling, the leg slip position can be used to defend the paddle sweep shot.

#### **Gully**

Use if ball is swinging, after wicket and new batter at the crease, if the pitch is slow which may cause edges to travel wider towards gully.



## *Tips For Some Fielding Positions ctd*

### **Point**

Move backward/forward depending on the pace of the bowler.

### **Cover**

Some Captains may leave empty to try and encourage the batter to drive the ball which may edge to the keeper.

### **Deep backward square leg**

Is a position to cover aggressive shots for spin bowling.

### **Fine Leg**

Cover if the batter is tacking ball off their hip while facing pace bowling & batter playing sweep shots off a spinner.

### **Fly Slip**

Cover a batter who is glancing off the face of the bat to a pace bowler if no slips in play. An easy shot to get off strike if no slips or fly slip.

### **3rd Man**

If no slips in play gives cover to the glance shot.

### **Deep Point**

Not traditionally a heavy catching position but there to cover four runs from cut shots.

### **Deep Backward Point**

If there is pace on the pitch, batter playing the ball late which may make the ball travel behind square. Stop cut shots to four.

### **Deep Mid-Wicket**

Covers aggressive shots going for four.



## Death over tactics - Spin

Use match/player awareness always this is just an example of a field setting for being defensive at the end of a game when the game is there to be won or lost known as death over (The last over). Remember to focus on the batter's stronger shot and cover with a fielder.

**Positions:** 1 Midwicket, 2 Cover, 3 Leg Gully, 4 Fly Slip, 5 Long On, 6 Long Off, 7 Deep Backward Square Leg, 8 Deep Sweeper, 9 Deep Cover, WK-Up To Stumps

**Off/Leg Split**

4/5

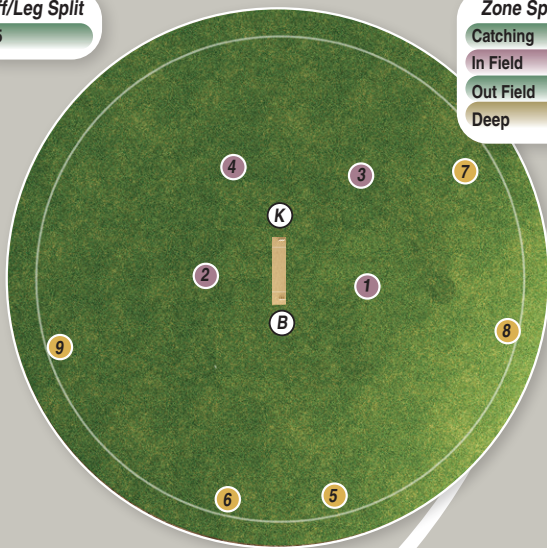
**Zone Split**

Catching 0

In Field 4

Out Field 0

Deep 5



## Death Bowling - Pace

Use match/player awareness always this is just an example of a field setting for being defensive at the end of a game when the game is there to be won or lost known as death over (The last over). Remember to focus on the batter's stronger shot and cover with a fielder.

Positions: 1 Long Off, 2 Extra Cover, 3 Backward Point, 4 Mid Wicket, 5 Mid On, 6 Long On, 7 Long Point, 8 Deep Square Leg, 9 3rd Man, WK-Standing Back

Off/Leg Split

5/4

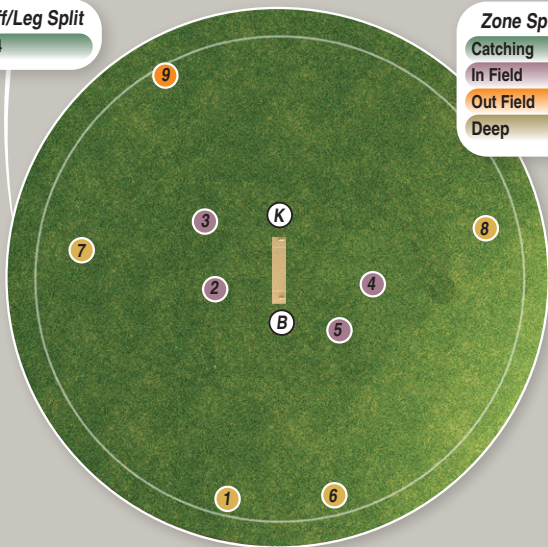
Zone Split

Catching 0

In Field 4

Out Field 1

Deep 4



## Resilience

You don't get to be a talented cricketer unless you have resilience. The ability to power through bad times, drops in form and unfair treatment is a trait of almost every top-class player. To develop mental strength in cricket after something happens that didn't go your way try and reflect on these three questions,

1. What happened? (Just facts)
2. What did you think/react to when it happened? (Emotions/Reactions)
3. What action can you take in the future to stop it happening again (Planning)

Remember we all make mistakes. The important thing is trying to learn from them but don't worry we've all made plenty of mistakes so never feel you're on your own.

*"I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. Twenty-six times, I've been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."*

**Michael Jordan**







Remember the most important  
thing about sport is having fun  
with your mates, it's that simple,  
enjoy it.









