

PREFACE

The game of Cricket has been governed by a series of Codes of Law for over 250 years. These Codes have been subject to additions and alterations recommended by the governing authorities of the time. Since its formation in 1787, the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) has been recognised as the sole authority for drawing up the Code and for all subsequent amendments. The Club also holds the World copyright.

The basic Laws of Cricket have stood remarkably well the test of well over 250 years of playing the game. It is though the real reason for this is that cricketers have traditionally been prepared to play in the Spirit of the Game as well as in accordance with the Laws.

In 2000, MCC revised and re-wrote the Laws for the new Millennium. In this Code, the major innovation was the introduction of the Spirit of Cricket as a Preamble to the Laws. Whereas in the past it was assumed that the implicit Spirit of the Game was understood and accepted by all those involved, MCC felt it right to put into words some clear guidelines, which help to maintain the unique character and enjoyment of the game. The other aims were to dispense with the Notes, to incorporate all the points into the Laws and to remove, where possible, any ambiguities, so that captains, players and umpires could continue to enjoy the game at whatever level they might be playing. MCC consulted widely with all the Full Member Countries of the International Cricket Council, the Governing Body of the game. There was close consultation with the Association of Cricket Umpires and Scorers. The Club also brought in umpires and players from all round the world.

This latest version, The Laws of Cricket (2000 Code 2nd Edition 2003) includes several necessary amendments arising from experience and practical application of the Code around the world since October, 2000.

Significant dates in the history of the Laws are as follows:

1700 Cricket was recognised as early as this date.

1744 The earliest known Code was drawn up by certain "Noblemen and Gentlemen" who used the Artillery Ground in London.

1755 The laws were revised by "Several Cricket Clubs, particularly the Star and Garter in Pall Mall".

1774 A further revision was produced by "a Committee of Noblemen and Gentlemen of Kent, Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex, Middlesex and London at the Star and Garter"

1786 A further revision was undertaken by a similar body of Noblemen and Gentlemen of Kent, Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex, Middlesex and London.

1788 The first MCC Code of Laws was adopted on 30th May.

1835 A new Code of Laws was approved by the MCC Committee on 19th May.

- 1884 After consultation with cricket clubs worldwide, important alterations were incorporated in a new version approved at an MCC Special General Meeting on 21 st April.
- 1947 A new Code of Laws was approved at an MCC Special General Meeting on 7th May. The main changes were aimed at achieving clarification and better arrangement of the Laws and their interpretations. This did not, however, exclude certain definite alterations which were designed to provide greater latitude in the conduct of the game as required by the widely differing conditions in which Cricket was played.
- 1979 After five editions of the 1947 Code, a further revision was begun in 1974 with the aim being to remove certain anomalies, consolidate various Amendments and Notes, and to achieve greater clarity and simplicity. The new Code of Laws was approved at an MCC Special General Meeting on 21 st November.
- 1992 A second edition of the 1980 Code was produced, incorporating all the amendments which were approved during the intervening twelve years.
- 2000 A new Code of Laws, including a Preamble defining the Spirit of Cricket was approved on 3rd May, 2000.

Many queries on the Laws, which apply equally to women's cricket as to men's, are sent to MCC for decision every year. MCC, as the accepted Guardian of the Laws, which can only be changed by the vote of two-thirds of the Members at a Special General Meeting of the Club, has always been prepared to answer the queries and to give interpretations on certain conditions, which will be readily understood.

- (a) In the case of league or competition cricket, the enquiry must come from the committee responsible for organising the league or competition. In other cases, enquiries should be initiated by a representative officer of a club, or of an umpires' association on behalf of his or her committee, or by a master or mistress in charge of school cricket.
- (b) The incident on which a ruling is required must not be merely invented for disputation but must have actually occurred in play.
- (c) The enquiry must not be connected in any way with a bet or wager.

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