**JUNIOR RULES - SECTION ONE**

**GENERAL RULES FOR JUNIOR CRICKET**

(Junior Cricket is managed by the Junior Committee)

1. **ELIGIBILITY**

AGE LIMITS – 2024 SEASON

* U19 – 18 or under on 1st September 2023
* U15 – 14 or under on 1st September 2023
* U13 – 12 or under on 1st September 2023
* U11 – 10 or under on 1st September 2023
* U9 – 8 or under on 1st September 2023

All players shall not have reached the age specified for the particular competition before September 1st of the preceding year and shall have registered for the current season as a Junior player within the League. Nor shall a player play in the same knock-out competition in the same season for another club. A completed match shall be one in which the results determined wholly by match play. An abandoned match whether or not it is to be replayed shall not be deemed to be a complete match for the purpose of eligibility.

1. **REGISTRATION**

As far as possible, all Juniors should have their details entered into Play Cricket under their D&CCL club

Players must only play for one D&CCL club at a time, UNLESS their own club does not field a team at one of their eligible age groups. I.e. if their own club has an U13 team, but not an U15 team, they can play U13 with their own club and U15 for another.

In this instance, they can play for more than one team, with the agreement of both teams (and, ideally, having informed the junior committee). They must also register with the other team on Play Cricket.

Players transferring between clubs must not have any obligations / arrears to their old club, be registered by their new club, and be deleted by the club they have left.

Juniors playing senior cricket in other Leagues, for other clubs, are eligible to play in D&CCL games at junior level only.

Fielding an ineligible player may result in the forfeiture of that match. The decision of the Junior Committee on eligibility is final.

1. **MATCH ORGANISATION**

Clubs shall provide for each team, a team manager and an umpire.

The home team is responsible for scoring. This MUST be done on Play Cricket (it can, of course, be scored in a scorebook, as well). This must also be scored ball-by-ball to enable eventual league positions to be decided. The result must be recorded on the day of the match.

Repeated failure to record match scores in this way will result in forfeiture.

All matches must be played on the specified dates unless otherwise agreed with the Junior Committee.

In previous years, the Junior Committee has encouraged flexibility when fixtures can’t be fulfilled e.g. when rained off. With clubs playing ever more junior and senior cricket, this has become harder to achieve – pitches are less available.

From this year, the committee will schedule as much cricket as possible, and if a game is rained-off, then the points will simply be shared, rather than the game rearranged.

If there is any other reason a match cannot be played on the scheduled date – e.g. clash with a cup competition – then please inform the junior committee, at the first possible opportunity. If the reason is sound, then we will reschedule the fixture. If we find the reason spurious or avoidable, or just too late to reasonably reschedule, then the team must fulfil the fixture or forfeit the points

All matches must be played under the current laws of the M.C.C. and relevant senior local rules except as otherwise provided for in these rules.

League approved artificial pitches may be used.

Full pitch covers may be used before and during a match

All players must wear appropriate protective equipment. All batters must wear helmets. All wicket keepers must wear helmets up to, and including, Under 15.

The fielding side will provide their own ball which must have been supplied by the League. In the 2024 season these balls will be orange as they have proven most visible in late evening light. Only in the event that a club has used all of their orange balls, an equivalent ball of another colour can be used.

The home club are responsible for the clear indication of the numbers of overs remaining.

In league matches, the visiting team bat first. In cup competitions, or in knock-out or Finals stages of a league competition, the teams toss for choice of innings.

Any club disputing the result of a match must alert the Junior Secretary within seven days of the match. In all cases of protest or appeal to the Junior Committee, representatives of the clubs concerned shall leave the room during discussion of the protest or appeal, if this is requested by the Junior Committee.

1. **JUNIOR LEAGUE COMPETITIONS**
2. Where Junior league competitions are split into geographical or other equal divisions, the winner of each group together with any runner(s)-up, will contest a knock-out stage(s) to determine a league winner.
3. Where Junior league competitions are split into seeded divisions, the winner is decided on league results.  
     
    (i) In determining the group winner and any group runner- up, teams will first rank in order of the highest number of points obtained. If one or more teams are level on equal points, head to head results will count first, then Group Match Ratio at 4(d) below, will apply. to those head to head fixtures.

(ii) In determining the best runner-up from two or more groups, the Group Match Ratio at 4(d) below will apply irrespective of the number of points gained by each contender within its group. Group Match Ratio will be calculated across all completed matches.

1. The Group Match Ratio will be the percentage obtained for any team by dividing (i) the team’s total runs scored per wicket lost BY (ii) the team’s total runs conceded per wicket taken in the case of:
   * 1. breaking a tie in one division tie, the head-to-head matches
     2. breaking a tie across divisions, all completed League matches
2. The team with the higher or highest Group Match Ratio will take priority ranking.  
   In the event of a tie, the team(s)

(i) scoring the higher or highest aggregate runs, then

(ii) losing the lower or lowest runs, then

(iii) conceding the lower or lowest runs, then

(iv) taking the higher or highest number of wickets shall take priority ranking.

Any indecision thereafter shall be settled by decision of the Junior Committee.

The Rules of Play for Under 19s, Under 15s, Under 13s, Under 11s and Under 9s will follow those shown in Sections Junior 2 to 6.

Common sense should always be used, especially with the younger age groups and abilities when adjudicating on wides and no balls. Please see the following notes on Inclusion and Fair Play.

**INCLUSION AND FAIR PLAY IN THE D&CCL JUNIOR LEAGUE**

The D&CCL Junior League want to make cricket in our area as inclusive as possible. Inclusion should come first, competition a close second.

It’s the main reason that the Junior Committee have decided again, after discussion, to keep Under 13 as Pairs cricket. It keeps more players involved, playing at the right level, and prevents the game becoming about 4 or 5 “star” players and few others. (Those playing at a higher level can play in higher age groups, or open age cricket once in school Year 8).

This document gives guidance to co-ordinators, coaches and umpires on how games in the league should run.

Almost all our players are learning the game all the time. Especially for the younger players, we shouldn’t assume they even know all of the rules. So, a big part of your role in matches is to help all the children learn rules and develop skills.

By following this guidance – **and above all by talking to your opponents ahead of games** – we believe we can create games where we keep the enthusiasm of all the children involved, develop their knowledge and passion, while ensuring the best team wins.

**Adults**

In a game of junior cricket, adults may be conducting up to three roles:

* Coach
* Umpire

And, however much responsibility for field placings and bowling changes is devolved to juniors

* de-facto Captain, with the responsibility for playing within the Spirit of Cricket.

The Spirit of Cricket talks about playing hard but fair, and has respect as a central principle. If you feel this isn’t happening, please work as a team with your opposite number to get the juniors back to playing the game in the right way.

It can be a hard balance to strike, but if we put inclusion first then it should be clear how to make the game work best for all the juniors.

It’s up to adults, working as a team to help this to happen.

**Sledging**

Setting out to annoy or upset opponents has no place in the game.

Where we have had unpleasant incidents in the league, it has usually started verbally. There’s no reason to talk negatively to the opposition team, and so we’d like to see it eliminated from the league. That’s directly “You’re rubbish, mate” and indirectly “They can’t handle this bowling”.

Of course, there are lots of ways to verbally support your own team, and teams should be encouraged to do as much of this as possible, and to include everyone when they do so.

And naturally, if you want to congratulate your opponents, please do!

**Safety**

Safety is always a prime consideration. By following this guidance – especially on match-ups - a safe environment should be created. If you have any concerns at any time, please speak immediately to the umpires / opposing coaches. We want to head off incidents, not have to respond to them

**Match-Ups**

The best cricket is produced by matching bowlers and batters of fairly equal ability, especially in pairs cricket.

It’s essential for the safety of players – we cannot allow a bowler to bowl at a batter that is simply not able to safely face their pace.

And no-one learns anything from smashing a developing bowler, or repeatedly bowling a batter that you out-skill.

In pairs cricket, teams often start and finish with their strongest pairings. We’d recommend this, but you can arrange pairings in any way, provided both coaches agree.

Please work with your opposite number to get the match-ups right and continually bear in mind the playing conditions – be that deteriorating light, or pitches affected by rain showers.

**Playing at the right level**

Boys should play at or above their age groups, while girls can play an age group below too.  
But we’d encourage flexibility, if appropriate. E.g. in the case of a player new to the game, it may be appropriate for them to play an age group down to gain confidence.  
If you believe it’s appropriate, please do it, but PLEASE discuss with the other coach first.  
Similarly, if you have a player with a particular need e.g. with limited mobility for whom you can make an easy adjustment e.g. bat with a runner / run a shorter distance between wickets – please do so, just discuss it first.

**Multiple teams in one age group**

If your team runs more than one team in an age group (i.e. A and B teams) these must be fixed, during the season and through to finals days.

Injuries and absence obviously mean there may be some need to move between teams but you cannot change teams to produce the desired results. If the Junior Committee believe this is taking place, they leave open the option to deduct points.  
Please be open with the opposing team on the relative strength of your teams.

**Over-Coaching**

Junior players are learning all the time, so there is often a need to coach them through the game, but this should not become ball by ball. This is probably distracting to your own players, it is almost certainly distracting to the opposition and it is arguably disrespectful.

Unless there’s an issue of safety (or say, a batter takes guard leaving all three stumps on show, or a bowler repeated bowls from well-behind the bowling crease), we’d encourage coaching before innings and, if needed, between pairs or at the fall of wickets.

Constantly instructing players means they make fewer decisions for themselves and learn less about the game. We’d encourage open questions instead. E.g. for field placings:

* Where has the batter been scoring?
* How are you stopping singles here?
* With this field, what balls should you try not to bowl?

**Spirit of Cricket**

We don’t always see it in the professional game (or even in village cricket!) – but we’d like to promote fair play in the junior league. Examples include, but aren’t limited to:

* **Running out an injured player**If someone’s pulled up, or been hit and wandered out of the crease, we’d encourage teams not to complete the run out
* **Mankads/Running out the non-striker**The non-striker shouldn’t be gaining an advantage, and while running them out is in the rules, it tends not to make for a sporting atmosphere.  
  Do ask the umpire to give the batter a warning, and umpires should then enforce them staying in their crease until the ball is bowled.
* **Repeated Stumpings**A stumping is one of the most skilful parts of the game, and one we love to see.  
  But if you’re stumping the same player multiple times, then the match-ups aren’t quite right. We’d encourage you to congratulate the keeper, and help the batter work out what they need to do differently.
* **Responsibility on players**All our umpires are volunteers. Most often the players know best if they edged the ball, took a clean catch, if the ball touched the rope etc.  
  Please encourage your players to be honest, and help the umpires out!
* **Respect your opposition**The MCC encourage players to “Respect your captain, team-mates, opponents and the authority of the umpires” and “Congratulate the opposition on their successes, and enjoy those of your own team”.  
  Children, coaches, parents can all get carried away. It’s always worth remembering this is about children, playing a game, for their fun and enjoyment.

**No Balls, Wides, LBW, Dangerous Balls**

Extra ball and 1 run for each no ball and wide. Max of 8 ball overs.

These rules are also in place to help include more and less able players on a more level playing field.

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|  | Under 11s | Under 13s | Under 15s |
| No Balls | Full Toss over waist height  Bouncer over shoulder height (!) | Full Toss over waist height  Bouncer over shoulder height | Full Toss over waist height  Bouncer over shoulder height |
| No Balls: Throws | Not to be no-balled. Usually at this age, kids throw just to get the ball down the other end – and usually produces more hittable balls | Bowler to be given a warning if a clear throw. Talk to other coach, explain to bowler you can’t give a wicket if they clearly throw | No-ball. |
| No Balls: Over-stepping | Not to be no-balled.  Explain that some part of the foot needs to be behind the crease | Warn the bowler, explain you can’t give a wicket if they clearly overstep | Warn the bowler, no-ball if subsequently clearly over step |
| No Balls: Multiple bounces / rolling | Not to be no-balled.  Explain that you can’t give a wicket if it bounces twice before the popping crease | Give bowler one chance, explain it can’t bounce twice before the popping crease | No-ball if bounces twice before the popping crease |
| Wides | Right to edge of crease on either side | Right to edge of crease on either side | Consider if balls passing leg side are genuinely hittable` |
| LBW | No LBW | No LBW, but intervene if players are just blocking stumps without playing a shot. We must have a contest between bat and ball.  If this occurs, discuss with players and other umpire, and warn you will need to call Dead Ball if no shot is played | LBW, but if in any doubt, not out |

**Dangerous bowling.**

We need to consider that juniors may not have full control, but we must put safety first.

As per the MCC Laws, a high bouncer or a high full toss are not necessarily considered dangerous. The umpires need to consider:

* The skill of the striker
* The speed, length, height and direction of the ball

to determine if the ball is not safe. That the striker is wearing protective equipment shall be disregarded.

If a ball is considered dangerous, a first and last caution will be given to the bowler. If they bowl another dangerous delivery, they will be removed from the attack.

**If you have questions about any of this – or maybe a concern that your or another club doesn’t always follow this guidance – please get in touch by e-mailing: Sam Monteath, Inclusion at: dccljuniorsinclusion@gmail.com**