



England Cricket Association for the Deaf Umpires and Scorers Guide



To a regular cricket viewer, watching a match played by 22 Deaf people would appear the same as any other cricket match.

The purpose of this guide is to introduce Umpires and Scorers to the game and the few differences, in the approach and with some signals by the umpires.

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1. Introduction

Like most disabled sports, Deaf cricketers will have undergone a formal assessment to have their disability classified, depending upon its severity. Deaf sport has defined levels of hearing impairment that players are living with to play the game. The required level of impairment is higher for those wanting to play the game at International levels. Understanding what these levels are, is not an issue for officials and you will readily accept that the players on the team card are all eligible to play.

You might come across Deaf players at any level of cricket, playing alongside teammates who can hear. If so, the basic information provided here is equally as valid as it will be if you are appointed to a Deaf team. You would expect to be advised of any players who are Deaf, but there are no assurances you will be!

The English Cricket Association for the Deaf (ECAD), is a charitable organisation that organises most games for those living with impaired hearing. They run three main teams, ECAD North, Midlands and South, but they also have a representative team, a 40+, an Academy and a Chairman's XI. Some counties/geographic areas will have their own Deaf team.

There is also an England Deaf team.

Although there are a few matches between these teams, most of the games are a "hearing" team playing a "Deaf" team.

Scoring should be on a laptop using PCS PRO and, ideally, at least one of the two scorers will score using this method. Where possible, it is advantageous to the players and coaches if the 'live' scorer (usually the Home scorer) can use the wagon wheel. If a scorer does not use PCS PRO, then Play-Cricket Scorer App on a tablet/phone is an alternative.

Matches should be downloaded from Play-Cricket and uploaded at the end of the game. Statistics are then available to the managers/coaches via Play-Cricket. Scorers should also check if any specific reports, such as a scorecard, are required at the end of the game and these should then be emailed to the manager/coach.



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2. Communicating with the players

As you would anticipate, you will witness Deaf players using multiple forms of communication. Officials need to reflect upon how to adapt their processes to accommodate for these. Communication will include, lip reading, using British Sign Language (BSL) and, at the extreme, using a pen and paper. You should expect some players will have no hearing whatsoever.

Most teams will have at least one person whose hearing is sufficient to enable you to engage in a conversation with them. You will also find players using a variety of technological aids to assist them.

There are some general approaches you are advised to take:

- 1 If you wish to attract a Deaf person's attention, it is normal to approach them from the front (not the rear) and address them by name. If this does not work, gently touching them on the upper arm or shoulder is the recommended approach.
- 2 When talking to someone who is Deaf, do not raise your voice, unnecessarily slow down your normal speech pattern or exaggerate your pronunciation or "mouth words". Rather, make sure you are looking directly at them and are not waving your hands and particularly not doing so in front of your mouth.
- 3 Removing sunglasses also helps considerably, as facial expressions are a great aide to understanding.
- 4 Make sure people have understood what you said. Some words are harder to lip read than others and simply saying the same thing again, if they have not, may not be the right answer. Try rephrasing it.
- 5 In the pavilion, try to find a quiet(er) area to talk to someone and make sure you face the light ensuring your face is not in shadow.



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Hearing Aids of any type

In all domestic cricket, players are allowed to have these with them at all times, if they so choose. However, in Deaf v Deaf matches all hearing aids MUST be removed to create a level playing field. From a Laws perspective, they are regarded in the same way as a pair of glasses. If hearing aids are being worn, then the umpires may be asked to hold them whilst the player bowls.

In international Deaf Cricket, NO hearing appliances are allowed during warm up, practice or play.

British Sign Language (BSL)

Many players will use this to communicate with their teammates. It is quite typical for conversations to take place over extended distances.

Provided this is not distracting the opposition, there is no reason to stop it. However, if the umpire considers it is an attempt to distract, then the captain should be asked to tell the players to stop. If they do not stop, the Law should be applied in the usual way from there onwards.



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3. Pre-Match Preparation

It is VITAL that you allow extra time for this.

You will need to get a clear understanding of the hearing abilities of the team captains and coaches as appropriate PLUS the others in your officiating team (your colleague and the scorers). This will enable you and your colleagues to work out how you are going to communicate with each other and the captains during the match including the all-important meeting at the toss.

Hearing scorers may find they are scoring with a Deaf colleague so take this into account when doing the end-of-over, and other, checks.

Scorers will need a team sheet and may need some help in identifying players as it may be hard to attract the attention of nearby players. Communication with the umpires is important and walkie-talkies can be useful if used wisely. Scorers should not resort to shouting. Spending some time before the match preparing brief notes on players might be helpful. If in doubt, select a player lower down in the order and make a note to check and correct it as soon as possible.

4. On the field of Play

In general, umpires and scorers should officiate as they usually would, with a few extra allowances. Scorers will need to watch the umpire's signals closely as they may see more hand signals explaining, for example, a bowler's action to a batsman. It is helpful for the umpires and scorers to agree to check at any breaks in play if clarifications or corrections are required.

The Toss

This is still a vital part of the game and, as discussed previously, you should have made sure you and both captains have understood how it is going to be conducted i.e., there may be a translator or a signer present.

Getting going.

For umpires, starting the game may require some extra thought. Ringing a bell to tell the players the umpires are going out may not be enough. Talking directly to them may be necessary by entering the changing room, as they may not hear a knock on the door.

Umpires will need the bowler's name (games are typically 40 overs, max 8 per bowler) and to find out their intended action – hand actions can help with this, although the bowlers will know they have to tell the umpires. The batsman needs to know this as well, so describe it to them by mimicking the action.



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🔴 Giving Guard

Batsmen will want a guard and it may not be enough to say “a bit towards you” hand signals will help. A typical method is to point in the direction that you would like the batsman to move his bat and to give him the “thumbs up” when you deem it to be correct.

🔴 Calling Play

Once everyone is ready, the umpire will call play and some sort of signal might help – usually starting with their arm almost horizontal, often used to tell a bowler to wait – and then sweeping it forwards while calling ‘play’, will help those distant from the pitch.

🔴 The End of the Over

The accepted signal for the end of the over in Deaf cricket is the same signal normally used to indicate a free hit - arm above the head with a circular motion. These could be scope for confusion here, so umpires should approach this sensibly. It is rare for confusion to happen as there would have been a No Ball call & Signal before any Free Hit signal.

The call of ‘over’ is for the players, not really the scorers, enabling umpires to adjust the timing and their on-field position when making both the call and the signal. Scorers should carry out their usual end-of-over checks.

🔴 Appeals

People who can hear will, hopefully, only appeal for catches when they have heard something (or think they have). However, Deaf players will appeal whenever a player has played and missed. This is not excessive appealing; it is a consequence of their disability. This is one thing that is **essential** to be made clear in a pre-match conversation with any team that has normal hearing.

- 👉 Umpires should answer the appeal in the usual way but should wait for the bowler to turn and be looking at them.
- 👉 On the field, merely answering an appeal “not out” is not enough. There is no agreed “not out” signal, but this is one instance where umpires might decide that a shaking of the head and/or using the usual DRS signal for “not out” i.e., the horizontal waving of the hands – are things they might do.



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No Balls

Calling a No Ball can be challenging. An umpire's initial action for a foot fault No Ball, is to call loudly and signal so everyone playing understands and can react accordingly. They will also repeat the signal to the scorers when the ball is dead.

Often with Deaf players, many will not hear the call and the bowler, in particular, may be unaware. As well as making the call, umpires should consider keeping the signal going until the ball is dead. If the umpire needs to move it is not safe to do so with an outstretched arm so you might consider the use of a pre-signal. However, there is scope for misunderstanding here which umpires must take into consideration and discuss fully with the scorers before the start of the match.

Signals and scorers

When umpiring a Deaf team, it is possible their scorer may also be Deaf so shouting at them if they fail to acknowledge a signal is not helpful. Be prepared to wait and ensure the scorer is looking up before signalling. Sometimes players can obscure the scorer's view of an umpire so take a moment to give them a clear view.

In Deaf cricket, the players, and some spectators, will be looking to the umpire to clarify what has happened. It is therefore important that signals are clear and made for longer than usual to ensure all players, as well as the scorers, get the chance to see them. Having signalled to the scorers, umpires may choose to keep the signal going and turn to show it to the rest of the field.

Speed of play

Most matches are generally 40 overs and umpires are encouraged to keep play moving along. However, it can take Deaf bowlers longer to bowl their overs, mostly due to communication, for example when moving fielders around and waiting to ensure all fielders are ready and watching play. For scorers, this can make for a more relaxed game, however, there tend to be more run outs, as batsmen may be unable to hear the instruction to wait.



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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.

Respect your captain, team-mates, opponents, and the authority of the umpires.

Play hard and play fair.

Accept the umpire's decision.

Create a positive atmosphere by your own conduct and encourage others to do likewise.

Show self-discipline, even when things go against you.

Congratulate the opposition on their successes and enjoy those of your own team.

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.



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Guidelines for Players who Umpire and/or Score.

These guidelines are provided to help ensure that ECB and League regulations are consistently applied in both innings. They should be discussed with the Standing Umpire(s) prior to the toss.

Players who Umpire at the Strikers End

To maximise the match experience, it is recommended that experienced players who know the laws of the game assist the standing umpire by standing at the striker's end.

The Player is an Umpire and a Partner of the Standing Umpire and is:

- Responsible for stumping and run out decisions (the line needs to be visible to make sure of the grounding behind it).
- Ensuring the stumps and bails are correctly set after the wicket is broken.
- Confirming catches in the field and whether the players crossed before the catch.
- Confirming the ball reaches the boundary bouncing or on the full.
- Counting the valid deliveries in the over and acknowledgment of balls to go signals from the bowler's end umpire. (Signals are usually made with 2 balls to go in the over)
- Advising of any short runs.
- Advising of any deliveries that pass the batsman on the full above waist height in a standing position.
(the pace of the bowler is not relevant, and the waist is the belly button above the top of the trousers).
- Advising of any delivery that bounces above head height of the batsman in a standing position.
- Confirming the number of completed runs before the ball is dead or if thrown over the boundary by a fielder (the standing umpire will consult in these situations).
- Call no ball when the fielding side has more than two fielders behind square on the leg side or other fielding restriction violations depending on regulations for the match.
- The standing umpire may consult on other issues during the game.



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Guidelines for Players who Umpire and/or Score (cont.)

Players who Score.

The scorers are responsible the scores, which must be a minimum of the runs scored, wickets taken, and overs bowled. The umpires will want to be certain that all of their signals have been received so all signals must be acknowledged by a wave or other agreed method and correctly recorded in the score book.

The umpires do not keep score.

- Update the scorebook every ball and acknowledge all signals from the umpires.
- Update the scoreboard at least at the end of each over. The number of overs bowled is critical.
- Advise on number of balls left in the over when asked by the umpires.
- Advise on number of overs bowled by each bowler when asked by the umpires. (ECB young player bowling and fielding restrictions apply).
- Be available to confirm the score at the end of each innings, confirming the noted penalty runs and other irregularities that have occurred.
- Record the start and end time of any interruptions in play due to bad weather as this information is required to determine the number of overs lost in the game.