

Can You Play This Game?

Objectives

The objective of each team is to score more **runs** than the other team.

Pitch, Wickets and Creases

At either end of the pitch, 22 yards (20 m) apart, are placed the **wickets**. These serve as a target for the **bowling** side and are defended by the **batting** side. The **pitch** is 22 yards (20 m) or one **chain[24]** in length between the wickets and is 10 feet (3.0 m) wide. It is a flat surface and has very short grass that tends to be worn away as the game progresses. The "condition" of the pitch has a significant bearing on the match and team tactics are always determined with the state of the pitch, both current and anticipated, as a deciding factor.

Each **wicket** consists of three wooden **stumps** placed in a straight line and surmounted by two wooden crosspieces called **bails**; the total height of the wicket including bails is 28.5 inches (720 mm) and the combined width of the three stumps is 9 inches (230 mm).

Four lines, known as creases, are painted onto the pitch around the wicket areas to define the batsman's "safe territory" and to determine the limit of the bowler's approach. These are called the "popping" (or batting) crease, the bowling crease and two "return" creases.

The stumps are placed in line on the bowling creases and so these must be 22 yards (20 m) apart. A bowling crease is 8 feet 8 inches (2.64 m) long with the middle stump placed dead centre. The popping crease has the same length, is parallel to the bowling crease and is 4 feet (1.2 m) in front of the wicket. The return creases are perpendicular to the other two; they are adjoined to the ends of the popping crease and are drawn through the ends of the bowling crease to a length of at least 8 feet (2.4 m). When bowling the ball, the bowler's back foot in his "delivery stride" must land within the two return creases while his front foot must land on or behind the popping crease. If the bowler breaks this rule, the umpire calls "No ball".

The importance of the popping crease to the batsman is that it marks the limit of his safe territory for he can be stumped or run out if the wicket is broken while he is "out of his ground".