

Urban Cricket Rules!

The rules of Urban Cricket are simple: go out and play!

- No wickets? No worries! Just improvise.
- You can play with as many or as few players as you like. If it's only you and a mate, that's fine - all you need is one to bat and one to bowl.
- But there's no escape from demon bowlers in Urban Cricket - the only way you can't be got out is LBW (leg before wicket).

Swing like the experts with TapeBall

Do you want to swing the ball like England's Simon Jones? This simple technique called TapeBall could hold the key to how the top bowlers do their thing:

- Tape one side of the cricket ball up. The non-taped side of the ball will mimic the shine applied to hardballs by professional bowlers.
- When bowling you should find the ball will "swing" in the direction of the tape.
- Remember - you'll probably need a bit of practice before you play in any small spaces, so check your surroundings before you start swinging that ball...!

You know what to do - now get out there and play Urban Cricket!

Keep your eyes peeled for more info on Urban Cricket by visiting www.urbancricket.co.uk

Cool ways to play

The aim of Urban Cricket is for you to get out there, play and have fun. Why not try one of these great games:

- **Twenty20** - Try your own Urban Cricket version of the popular pro game by dividing your friends into equal teams and playing 20 balls per team.
- **One Day International** - Decide on a limited number of overs (there are 6 balls in an over) per player. For example, if there are four players on each side and you decide that each player should face five overs, each side will play a total of 20 overs.
- **Test match** - Each team must take 10 wickets to win, so if you are playing against just one mate you must get them out 10 times!

Get your kids active



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npm3641/03.06

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A parent's guide

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What is Urban Cricket?

Urban Cricket is an exciting grass roots sports initiative run by npower and the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

Aimed at children aged between 7 and 12 years old, the ethos of Urban Cricket is simple, get out there and play. The project aims to raise the profile of cricket by introducing the sport to a new audience and encouraging children to actively participate in sport.

npower has teamed up with Dr Carol Craig, Chief Executive of the Centre for Confidence and Well-Being in Glasgow and Alan McLean, a chartered psychologist and author of *The Motivated School* to provide some tips on how to encourage kids of all abilities to enjoy cricket.

Further information on the Centre's activities and access to their on-line resources can be found at www.centreforconfidence.co.uk. Information on Alan's work with schools is available on www.themotivatedschool.co.uk

Urban Cricket is only a starting point. The ECB employs Cricket Development Managers around the country who can provide help and advice for parents on where their children can go to play cricket and develop their skills. For your local contact please go to www.ecb.co.uk





Questions and answers



Pete Ackerley, Head of Development at the England & Wales Cricket Board, plays a straight bat to frequently asked questions from parents and carers.

Should young children play formal 11-a-side cricket matches or more informal games?

As with any sport, it's important that children feel they are part of the game. Formal competition structures and larger games can make some children feel excluded and scare them away from sport. A fun, well-structured and regularly monitored environment is the most positive place for children to be introduced to the basics of cricket.

What are the best training techniques to use while still keeping cricket fun?

Cricket is a very flexible sport, perhaps more so than other major sports. In its simpler form, it can be constantly modified to keep children interested.

Encouraging children to play other sports is a good way of keeping their interest and concentration and also helps their physical development.

At the ECB we have developed many different styles of coaching to support the changing needs of children as they grow and develop. These vary from a minimal instruction approach ("set up and stand back") where children learn about the game in a non-judgmental environment, to the directed learning approach which provides a more testing environment. Structured routines,

regulated games and a reward system, helps children set and achieve goals and gain a more realistic sense of achievement.

When should children start playing hard ball cricket?

It is important for children to be confident in their own ability before moving onto hardball cricket. There are many different forms of cricket that children can play first using softer balls that will help build confidence in their ability and their understanding of the game. For example - urban cricket which encourages children to go out and play cricket with a tennis ball in the back garden. Children can also add tape to a tennis ball - so they can start to experience the concept of swing.

Is it best for children to play cricket with others of a similar age and size?

The great thing about cricket is that children of all ages and sizes can play and be successful. However, children of the same age can be physically 3 or more years apart in terms of their individual stage of development, so it is more important that children with the same level of ability have the opportunity to play cricket together. This prevents the bigger, stronger, early-developing children being selected at the expense of the late-developing child, who may have more potential to be successful in the longer term.

My son/daughter is desperate to play for a team. Where do I go for advice?

Cricket in England and Wales has a nationwide development network, set up to administer the growth of the game. The development staff, both at Lord's and out in the counties, can give you help and advice on all aspects of cricket, including finding your nearest club. Cricket in England and Wales also has a highly developed Child Protection Policy, and the system of implementing this is the envy of UK sport, so we can guarantee that our cricket clubs are safe and positive environments.

There is at least one Cricket Development Manager in every county - to find yours visit our website www.ecb.co.uk/ecb/development

Are warming up and cooling down exercises important?

Warming up and cooling down is essential for maintaining fitness and staying safe. Serious injuries can be almost entirely avoided by wearing the right equipment, having respect for the game and taking care of your body. Although it might seem that only the more senior players need to warm up, getting into good habits at a young age is very important - everyone needs to allow the body to warm up and cool down in a healthy way.

The process of learning to get fit and healthy continues as children get older with the introduction of physical conditioning and flexibility, and an emphasis on training and practice rather than simply playing games. Taking care of their own fitness brings obvious positive physical and psychological benefits to a child's health.

I run the junior section at my local cricket club - should I bother with physical training, or just coach technique and leave them to get fit by themselves?

It's important to introduce children to the general principles of fitness (endurance, strength, flexibility and speed) at the right time - this is 9-12 years for boys and 8-11 for girls. From the onset of their growth spurt, we should actively encourage children to "build the engine" of physical conditioning and sporting performance. Developing the personal motivation to spend time training generates positive attitudes on and off the pitch and is a hugely positive outcome of participating in sport.



Dr Carol Craig and Alan McLean provide some practical advice on how to motivate and encourage children from the boundary.

Motivation

When it comes to cricket, the good news is children will tend to motivate themselves. Since cricket is active, fun and played in a team, it is something many youngsters want to participate in. The bad news is that it is all too easy to demotivate children. This can happen if the pressure to succeed takes away all the fun or if the experience is made negative by parents and carers, or those in charge, shouting at them or running them down. If you follow the advice in this guide, motivation shouldn't present a problem.

Motivation enhancers

- Good personal relationships
- Respect
- Feeling valued
- Feedback on how well you're doing
- Teamwork
- Enjoyment and fun
- Feeling in control

Motivation destroyers

- Feeling pressurised by others
- Being criticised harshly or unfairly
- Blame/negative reaction to mistakes
- Poor relationships



Giving feedback

The most motivating thing is getting feedback on how you are doing. In cricket some of this feedback is built into the game. Instantly you know how well you are doing from your contribution to the batting, bowling and fielding. But others - team mates, observers and coaches - can give you additional feedback on your performance which is not only motivating but can also improve performance.

Praise is simply positive feedback. Sometimes we are not overly generous with our praise - often preferring to point out what we think is wrong. But well delivered praise can keep motivation high and improve performance by ensuring people know what they are currently doing well. For praise to be a good learning tool, it needs to be specific and detailed.

It sounds more sincere if it is spontaneous and is usually best if it is not excessive. A little praise regularly is better than over the top praise now and again. Be particularly careful about

handing out excessive praise for small things: "If I'm going to be praised to the hilt for not very much, then why should I bother trying harder?"

What's more, even when excessive praise is handed out for real achievement, it can be embarrassing and also leads the individual to fear not playing as well next time. It is also much more motivating to praise effort, or participation, rather than talent or skill - effort is something under a person's control. A youngster can choose to put more energy or determination into something but find it harder to play more skilfully.

Even if parents or carers don't directly communicate feedback, disapproval can be expressed with a frown, a sigh, a critical look and so on. The problem is that the child picks up the disapproval but doesn't know why or what to do about it. So, feedback needs to be clear and expressed fully, stating reasons for failure and ways to overcome the difficulty.

Praise

Do

- Make it specific and detailed
- Say it as soon as you can
- Praise effort and participation rather than ability

Don't

- Give back-handed praise such as "why can't you play like that all the time?"
- Go over the top with praise

Giving encouragement

Giving a young person encouragement is often a better way to be supportive than giving out compliments or praise. You can give encouragement just by showing you're interested in what they are doing. Encouragement helps children feel valued just for being themselves, to learn to appreciate their special qualities and to feel capable. The essence of an encouraging relationship is showing an interest in the person as an individual and never comparing the individual to others.



Examples of encouragement

- Show you are interested by giving up time to support them.
- Ask them questions to encourage them to talk about their progress and achievements.
- Ask them what they enjoy best, their heroes, their strong points, where they would like to get better, what makes them feel good about playing.
- Recognise the effort they're putting in.
- Give them a smile or a pat on the back.
- Help them compare their performance with previous efforts - not with other people's.
- Help them develop an accurate match between their aspirations and their abilities.
- Give them lots of chances to show what they can do.
- Encourage your children to achieve THEIR best not to be THE best.
- Instil belief that ability is changeable, that they'll progress if they apply themselves and that there are many ways to succeed. Treat mistakes and failure as essential parts of learning and if they fail, point out how they can improve.

Tackling pessimism

Research has shown that there is a link between having an optimistic outlook and sporting performance. So one of the best things you can do is show them how to stay positive and optimistic. The difference between pessimistic and optimistic attitudes is that when something goes wrong, pessimists believe that the problem will last; it will affect every aspect of play and often it will be taken personally.

Pessimistic thinking can also affect people when things go right. If a pessimist does well, he or she can see it as a 'fluke', a one-off and not something they can take credit for. So pessimists don't build on successes, they minimise them.



The problem with pessimistic thinking, both on and off the field, is that it absorbs energy, stops people from concentrating and often leads them to feel dispirited and give up. This is why pessimistic thinking is often self-fulfilling.

To counteract pessimism, become aware of these types of thought patterns in yourself and others and actively encourage attitudes which build optimism. This means using facts which lead to more optimistic conclusions. When things go wrong, discourage people from giving explanations which sound as if the problems are permanent.

And find ways to minimise the damaging effect on the self-esteem of the team or the individual player. You might point out that they were tired or that they were playing in bright sunlight. Of course, you must also encourage youngsters to face problems squarely and not deny them, but keeping optimism levels high also means minimising the effects of negative situations.

Building optimism

Encourage youngsters to see problems as temporary and restricted. Encourage them to see success as lasting, affecting all areas of play and something they can take credit for.

How to avoid being an overly-competitive parent/carer

When watching your child play cricket, you must always remember that this is about the child and their development and fun - it is not about you. This isn't a chance for you to feel good about yourself, or to live your life through your child. Pushy parents are ones who demand a lot and who praise only

when their child does well but who feel let down when the child fails. Remember that standing on the sidelines shouting and being too competitive is only likely to distract them rather than help them play better cricket.

