

# ECB ACO Concussion Guidance with Additional Clarification

3rd May 2024

In May 2021 the ECB issued the following Guidance:

“The following advice replaces all previous ECB ACO guidance and is intended to sit alongside any concussion training set for umpires (whether online or in person).

Concussion is a serious and on occasion potentially life-threatening condition. It can be caused by a relatively innocuous blow to the head. Umpires are among those consistently present at matches who have a Duty of Care to the players. Umpires are (in general) not qualified to determine whether anyone is suffering from a concussion, but they do have an ongoing general duty of care to players during a match. The discharge of this duty will be different in every circumstance but generally, the umpire should be deemed to be acting reasonably if they follow the steps outlined below.

Although the most likely cause of concussion is by a direct blow to the head caused by being hit by the ball, players may also suffer concussion from a blow to the head through collisions with each other, running into walls/fences around the boundary, or hitting their head on the ground. Therefore, where a blow to the head occurs, however mild, the umpires shall proceed with the following steps:

1. Either umpire shall immediately call and signal dead ball irrespective of the state of play. Runs completed, plus the run in progress, if the batsman have crossed, shall be allowed.
2. In the event of what is felt to be a serious / significant injury to a player, such as the player is rendered unconscious or is bleeding significantly or upon reasonable inspection by the umpire, exhibits any symptoms which give the umpire cause for significant concern, umpires should ask the host ground authority to call for emergency medical support (most likely an ambulance) and should discourage the player from moving or being moved until medical assistance arrives.
3. If the umpire(s) determine that they do not have immediate and significant concern that requires ground authority to call for emergency medical support, the umpires shall ask the Responsible Adult from the injured player's team to immediately assess whether the player is fit to continue. The umpires are not required to take part in this assessment.

4. If the Responsible Adult advises the player can continue, unless the umpire has concerns about the player continuing, the umpires shall recommence play. If the umpire(s) have any concerns about the player prior to play continuing or as play continues (either where the player has stayed on the field or returned), the umpire(s) should repeat Steps 1 to 3.
5. If the Responsible Adult advises the player can continue but subsequently either umpire has further concern about them, they shall repeat Steps 1 and 3. If the Responsible Adult continues to advise that the player is fit to continue and the umpire(s) continue to have any concerns about the player, the umpires shall leave the field of play and refuse to umpire the match. They shall report the issue to the authority responsible for the game.

#### Notes;

1. The term Responsible Adult is used in this document to mean a person from the injured player's Club with a duty of care over the player and determined by the injured player's Club to be capable of making a decision as to the player's health and/or welfare. This may include the Captain and/or Coach. The responsibility for ensuring the Responsible Adult is trained about, and aware of, all issues they must consider when making the decision, rests with the Club. Umpires may rely on the assessment of the Responsible Adult but should continue to apply the Steps detailed above as they deem appropriate in the circumstances.
2. In all circumstances the Responsible Adult must be over 18, including for youth teams and adult teams with a captain under 18. (In such instances the Responsible Adult should therefore be an adult coach or other relevant adult Club official).
3. In the event the player leaves the field this shall not result in the accrual of penalty time as defined in Law 24.2.
4. Playing time lost in dealing with any incident of concussion shall be added to the day's playing time (most typically for a limited overs game the cut off time required to complete the overs shall be extended)."

Applying this guidance means that, under Law 20.4.2, the ball is considered Dead at the instant of the blow to the head. It follows that once a blow to the head has been suffered by batter, fielder, or wicketkeeper no dismissal can take place and runs, including extras, cannot be scored. The guidance overrides the Laws. The fact that a player may be wearing a helmet makes no difference. Umpires are expected to apply this guidance without exception. They should remind captains about this at the toss.

MCC are aware of the inconsistencies between the Laws and the Guidance. They say in Tom Smith's Cricket Umpiring & Scoring (2022 Edition) at page 292 that: "Any guidance from the local Governing Body on head strikes must, of course, be followed and should take precedence."

This guidance available on the ECB website has not changed since it was written in 2021.

It has since become apparent that clarity is required on the application of Law in the case of a head strike in the recreational game. This is provided below and will also be made available to County Boards/Foundations and Leagues.

1. If the ball strikes a player on the head, irrespective of whether they are wearing a helmet, then a dead ball should be called immediately. Either umpire can do this.
2. The dead ball should be called, irrespective of the apparent significance of the force with which the ball strikes the player e.g. even if it is what might ordinarily be deemed a 'slight, glancing deflection'.
3. Irrespective of when a dead ball is called (an umpire might, on occasion, not call it immediately):
  - i. No runs may be scored from the moment the head strike occurs e.g. if, after a strike to the batter's head, the batters 'complete' a run before dead ball is called, then that run does not count.
  - ii. Neither batter can be dismissed following a head strike e.g. if the ball strikes a fielder's head, having been hit by a batter, and is then caught, then the batter is not out.

Please note that the above would apply if a collision of heads would take place with fielders as well as head strikes from a delivery.

We would advise umpires, particularly during the early part of the season, to ensure that captains are clear as to how this area of the Law will be applied.

[For full ECB Head Injury & Concussion Guidelines click here](#)