Law 6 – The bat

Approved by MCC 7th May 2008
Effective date: 1st October 2008

1. The bat
The bat consists of two parts, a handle and a blade.

2. Measurements
All provisions in sections 3 to 6 below are subject to the measurements and restrictions stated in Appendix E.

3. The handle
(a) One end of the handle is inserted into a recess in the blade as a means of joining the handle and the blade. The part of the handle that is then wholly outside the blade is defined to be the upper portion of the handle. It is a straight shaft for holding the bat. The remainder of the handle is its lower portion used purely for joining the blade and the handle together. It is not part of the blade but, solely in interpreting 5 and 6 below, references to the blade shall be considered to extend also to the lower portion of the handle where relevant.
(b) The handle is to be made principally of cane and/or wood, glued where necessary and bound with twine along the upper portion.
(c) Providing 7 below is not contravened, the upper portion may be covered with materials solely to provide a surface suitable for gripping. Such covering is an addition and is not part of the bat. Note: however, 8 below.
(d) Notwithstanding 4(c) and 5 below, both the twine binding and the covering grip may extend beyond the junction of the upper and lower portions, to cover part of the shoulders as defined in Appendix E.

4. The blade
(a) The blade comprises the whole of the bat apart from the handle as defined above. The blade has a face, a back, a toe, sides and shoulders. See Appendix E.
(b) The blade shall consist solely of wood.
(c) No material may be placed on or inserted into either the blade or the lower portion of the handle other than as permitted in 3(d) above and 5 and 6 below, together with the minimal adhesives or adhesive tape used solely for fixing these items, or for fixing the handle to the blade.

5. Covering the blade
All bats may have commercial identifications on the blade. Grade A and Grade B bats may have no other covering on the blade except as permitted in 6 below. Grade C bats may have a cloth covering on the blade. This may be treated as specified in 6(d) below. Such covering is additional to the blade and is not part of the bat. Note: however, 8 below.

6. Protection and repair
Providing neither 4 above nor 7 below is contravened,
(a) solely for the purposes of either (i) protection from surface damage to the face, sides and shoulders of the blade or (ii) repair to the blade after damage material that is not rigid, either at the time of its application to the blade or subsequently, may be placed on these surfaces. Any such material shall not extend over any part of the back of the blade except in the case of (ii) above and then only when it is applied as a continuous wrapping covering the damaged area.
(b) solid material may be inserted into the blade for repair after damage other than surface damage. Additionally, for protection from damage for Grades B and C, material may be inserted at the toe and/or along the sides, parallel to the face of the blade. The only material permitted for any insertion is wood with minimal essential adhesives.
(c) to prevent damage to the toe, material may be placed on that part of the blade but shall not extend over any part of the face, back or sides of the blade.
(d) the surface of the blade may be treated with non-solid materials to improve resistance to moisture penetration and/or mask natural blemishes in the appearance of the wood. Save for the purpose of giving a homogenous appearance by masking natural blemishes, such treatment must not materially alter the colour of the blade.
Any materials referred to in (a), (b), (c) or (d) are additional to the blade and not part of the bat. Note: however, 8 below.

7. Damage to the ball
(a) For any part of the bat, covered or uncovered, the hardness of the constituent materials and the surface texture thereof shall not be such that either or both could cause unacceptable damage to the ball.
(b) Any material placed on any part of the bat, for whatever purpose, shall similarly not be such that it could cause unacceptable damage to the ball.
(c) For the purposes of this Law, unacceptable damage is deterioration greater than normal wear and tear caused by the ball striking the uncovered wooden surface of the blade.

8. Contact with the ball
In these Laws,
(a) reference to the bat shall imply that the bat is held in the batsman's hand or a glove worn on his hand, unless stated otherwise.
(b) contact between the ball and either ;
  (i) the bat itself or
  (ii) the batsman's hand holding the bat or
  (iii) any part of a glove worn on the batsman's hand holding the bat or
  (iv) any additional materials permitted under 3, 5 or 6
  shall be regarded as the ball striking or touching the bat, or being struck by the bat.

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APPENDIX E – The bat

Grading of bats:

Grades A, B and C are bats conforming to Law 6 sections 1 to 8 inclusive. Any other bats are graded below C and are not recognised in the Laws. Grade A bats, the top grade, may be used at any level. Grades B, C and lower grades may be used only at or below levels determined by the Governing Body for cricket in the country concerned.

The blade:

The face of the blade is its main striking surface. The back is the opposite surface. The shoulders, sides and toe are the remaining surfaces, separating the face and the back. The shoulders, one on each side of the handle, are along that portion of the blade between the first entry point of the handle and the point at which the blade first reaches its full width. The toe is the surface opposite to the shoulders taken as a pair. The sides, one on each side of the blade, are along the rest of the blade, between the toe and the shoulders.

Adhesives:

Throughout, adhesives are permitted only where essential and only minimal in quantity.

Materials in handle:

As a proportion of the total volume of the handle, materials other than cane, wood or twine are restricted to one-tenth for Grades A and B and one-fifth for Grade C. Such materials must not project more than 3.25 in/8.26cm into the lower portion of the handle.

Binding and covering of handle:

The permitted continuation beyond the junction of the upper and lower portions of the handle is restricted to a maximum, measured along the length of the handle, of 2.5 in/6.35 cm for the twine binding, 2.75 in/6.99 cm for the covering grip.

Length and width:

The overall length of the bat, when the lower portion of the handle is inserted, shall not be more than 38 in/96.5 cm. PThe width of the bat shall not exceed 4.25 in/10.8 cm at its widest part. Permitted coverings, repair material and toe guards, not exceeding their specified thicknesses, may be additional to the dimensions above.

Length of handle:

Except for bats of size 6 and less, the handle shall not exceed 52% of the overall length of the bat.

Covering of blade:

The cloth covering permitted for Grade C bats shall be of thickness not exceeding 0.012 in/0.3 mm before treatment as in 6.6(d).

Protection and repair of blade:

The material permitted in 6.6(a) shall not exceed 0.04 in/1 mm in thickness. In 6.6(a)(ii), the repair material shall not extend along the length of the blade more than 0.79 in/2 cm in each direction beyond the limits of the damaged area. Where used as a continuous binding, any overlapping shall not breach the maximum of 0.04 in/1 mm in total thickness. In 6.6(d), the use of non-solid material which when dry forms a hard layer more than 0.004 in/0.1 mm in thickness is not permitted.

Toe and side inserts:

The wood used must not be more than 0.3 in/0.89 cm in thickness. The toe insert shall not extend from the toe more than 2.5 in/6.35 cm up the blade at any point. Neither side insert may extend from the edge more than 1 in/2.54 cm across the blade at any point.

Toe protection:

The maximum permitted thickness of protective material placed on the toe of the blade is 0.12 in/3mm.

Commercial identifications:

These identifications must not exceed 0.08 in/0.2 mm in thickness. On the back of the blade they must cover no more than 50% of the surface. On the face of the blade, they must be confined within the top 9 in/22.86 cm, measured from the bottom of the grip.

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Law 6 – The bat

MCC Members vote for re-written Law of Cricket

7th May 2008

MCC members overwhelmingly pass vote for new Law 6 (The bat).

Traditional manufacturing methods will preserve fair competition between batsmen and bowlers.

MCC Members have today voted to re-write a key Law of Cricket. At a Special General Meeting held this afternoon at Lord's, Members overwhelmingly voted in favour of re-writing Law 6 (The bat). A two-thirds majority was needed to pass the Law, and the final result saw 98.6% vote in favour.

In recognition of the importance of the Law, MCC conducted a full consultation: discussions were held with the International Cricket Council and governing bodies of Test playing nations; nine different bat manufacturers from across the world gave their views; technical advice was sought from material scientists; and postal voting forms were sent out to all 18,000 Full and Senior Members. Additionally MCC investigated future supplies of willow - for the blades - and cane - for the bat handles - to ensure they could meet demand.

John Stephenson, MCC's Head of Cricket explained that the Law aims to maintain the equilibrium between bat and ball:

> "In cricket, the battle between bat and ball is key. If one comes to dominate the other, the game will become predictable and less enjoyable to play and watch. While cricket pitches, balls and boundaries have changed little in centuries, modern bats have developed to the extent that mis-hits are now sometimes clearing the boundary rope for six. By ensuring that bats are made in the traditional manner, MCC hopes to safeguard the traditional balance of the game.
>
> "We have seen the impact of new technology and materials on other sports. Golfers drive the ball enormous distances, tennis players serve at greater speeds, footballers can dip and swerve the ball extravagantly: if the development of cricket bats is left unchecked the balance could be tipped too far towards batsmen.
>
> "Modern training methods have allowed many batsmen to become stronger and fitter than their predecessors, thus hitting the ball harder and further. MCC is not trying to legislate against those players, but rather the new materials that could give them an unfair advantage."

The new Law stipulates that 90% of the volume of bat handles should consist of cane, wood and/or twine, with the other 10% for the purpose of reducing vibration, for example rubber. It states bat handles (including the splice) must not exceed 52% of the overall length of the bat, and restricts the thickness of materials that can be used to protect and repair bats.

It also introduces a grading system for bats - from Grade A to C - which allows for more leeway on the materials used, enabling bats to still be produced cheaply for use in lower levels of the game. All bat manufacturers will be asked to submit their designs to MCC for grading.

MCC will also carry out random tests on bats all over the world to ensure they comply with the new Law.

The new Law will come into effect from 1st October 2008. It will not apply retrospectively in amateur cricket so anyone using a bat after October that will be illegal under the new Law will be able to use the bat for its natural lifespan.

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