

Regulations Update

2026 season

Introduction

To improve volunteers' and other participants' experience in the recreational game, the ECB has amended its internal regulation approval cycle to enable more notice of any new (or amended) content to be given by the ECB before it takes effect. Going forwards, any changes to ECB Regulations will be communicated to the recreational game no later than Christmas before the season starts in which the regulations are to apply. The exception to this will be where it is imperative – for legal or other reasons - that new/amended content is released to the recreational game without delay (as occurred, for example, with the ECB's Player Gender Eligibility Regulations last season). Guidance documents, which contain recommendations rather than mandatory obligations, may also be released closer to the start of the season.

Certain changes have been made to ECB Regulations in advance of the 2026 season. The purpose of this document is to explain the key substantive changes that have been made. The updated Regulations will be uploaded to the Regulations website shortly, which can be accessed using the following link: <https://www.ecb.co.uk/about/policies/regulations>.

General Conduct Regulations (GCR) and Recreational Conduct Regulations (RCR)

1. Disciplinary panels will have the ability to draw negative conclusions from a participant's non-cooperation with a disciplinary investigation (see Regulation 19 of the GCR and 14(b) of the RCR).
2. Where an RCB or league refers a serious/complex case to the Cricket Regulator, the Cricket Regulator can issue a standalone charge if the referred participant fails to co-operate with the Cricket Regulator's investigation (see Regulation 73 of the GCR and 30 of the RCR). This power will be reviewed following the 2026 season.
3. There will be a 14-day deadline for participants to respond to any charge(s) brought by the Cricket Regulator under a serious/complex case referral (see Regulation 74 of the GCR and 31 of the RCR).
4. An 'admissibility of evidence' provision will be included in the Regulations, which provides that facts can be established by a disciplinary panel by any reliable means (see Regulations 32 and 79 of the GCR and 14(e)(iii) and 36 of the RCR). This would allow evidence such as video footage of an incident to be used where available, and disciplinary officers can also request footage of matches as part of their investigations (see Regulation 19 of the GCR and 14(b) of the RCR).
5. Guidance has been included that playing suspensions for junior cricketers should be expressed by reference to the number of matches that must be missed, rather than the number of weeks, as a suspension in weeks can have a disproportionate effect on a junior cricketer (see Guidance Note 11.2 to the GCR and Guidance Note 9.2 to the RCR).
6. The Regulations have been updated to clarify that a ban which applies to 'all cricket' means cricket that falls under the regulatory jurisdiction of the ECB (see Regulation 105 of the GCR and 73 of the RCR).
7. Further guidance has also been included for disciplinary panels to clarify what types of activity are covered by any ban they impose where an individual has multiple roles in cricket e.g. where a sanctioned individual is a player, coach and umpire, it should be

made clear which of these activities are covered by any ban (see Guidance Note 11.3 to the GCR and Guidance Note 9.3 to the RCR).

8. Given their severity and impact on individuals, lifetime bans imposed under the Regulations can be reviewed and potentially reduced in circumstances where the individual does not pose a threat to other participants and has taken significant steps to redeem themselves to justify their rehabilitation back into recreational cricket (see Regulations 107-117 of the GCR and 61-71 of the RCR).
9. Certain provisions in the GCR can be customised by RCBs and leagues to suit local disciplinary customs/practices. To prevent versions of the GCR being customised too heavily beyond what was intended, additional guidance has been added to clarify the scope of permitted amendments and the ability to customise certain provisions has been removed¹. The Regulations also now stipulate that any amendment which goes beyond what is permitted by the GCR will be deemed deleted and automatically replaced with the original provision from the GCR (see Regulation 3(c) of the GCR).
10. The National Counties Cricket Association has been included in the list of organisations that are required to adopt the GCR (National Counties themselves are already required to do so) (see definition of Relevant Cricket Organisation in the GCR).

Recreational Cricket Safety Regulations and Net Safety Guidelines

[INCLUDE WORDING FROM CLAIRE BOLTON ON REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE]

Disparity Regulations

Minor amendments to the Regulations have been made to clarify that they apply to ECB-organised national club competitions (but not any competitions in the talent pathway programmes).

Information sought by the Cricket Regulator

As you may already be aware, the Cricket Regulator can provide support to leagues in relation to their disciplinary processes. In order to facilitate that role, and enhance the relationships that the Cricket Regulator and ECB have with their key stakeholders, please can each league provide us with the name and contact details of their disciplinary officer (or equivalent).

For leagues which adopt the GCR or the RCR, please can you also provide us with a copy of the final version of the GCR or RCR which you adopt for the 2026 season. For the avoidance of doubt, this information is being requested (1) in order that the Cricket Regulator has the relevant regulations on hand in the event that a case is referred to it under the “serious and complex cases” mechanism in the GCR/RCR and (2) to give the Cricket Regulator an overview of leagues that have adopted the regulations across the recreational game. It is not the case that the Cricket Regulator (or ECB) intends to take a more proactive role in reviewing the regulations adopted by each league.

Please can you send the relevant information by email to recreationaldiscipline@cricketregulator.co.uk

¹ See Regulation 3(c) of the GCR and Guidance Notes A, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J and K of the GCR.