The Rules of Cricket

By Isfar Munir, the Cricket Guy

Cricket is the traditional bat-and-ball sport of choice is much of what was once the British Empire. Haverford College has a rich cricket tradition, as it’s the oldest continually played sport at the college. Many of the buildings of the Haverford Campus (Sharpless, Comfort, Lunt, Magill, etc.) are named after former Haverford Cricket players. Here are the rules of the game:

The Fundamentals

1) The game is played between two teams, 11 persons to a side
2) The game is contested in two innings: a batting and bowling innings. When one team is batting, the other is bowling. At the close of an innings, the teams switch
3) Teams that score the higher number of runs at the conclusion of both innings wins the match
4) All 11 players on a team bat; during the bowling innings, persons who are not bowling or the wicket-keeper are fielding
The Mechanics of the Game

1) The game is counted by *overs*
2) An *over* is defined as *6 legal deliveries of the ball by the bowling side*
3) An innings is generally defined as a number of overs (at Haverford its typically 20-25 overs per innings)
4) Each over must be bowled by a single bowler, but no bowler may bowl two overs in a row
5) An innings is declared close when the batting side has batted the innings length of overs or is bowled out by the bowling side
6) Batsmen bat in *batting pairs*; the batsman receiving the ball is the *striker*, and the other batsman is the *non-striker*. Batsmen exchange the strike in the process of scoring runs. When a batsman is out, another comes in to take his place
7) When 10 batsmen are out, the 11th man on the team has no partner left. At this stage, the innings is **closed**
The Pitch and the Field

The above image shows the cricket pitch. Most of the action in a cricket game takes place here. The two batsmen (striker and non-striker) are clearly visible in the image, as is the bowler. The set of sticks at either end of the pitch is known as the wicket (or the stumps). Roughly 3 feet in front of each set of wickets we can see a white line. This line is the crease.

The above is an illustration of the cricket field. The pitch occupies the center, and the field extends out 360° from the pitch. Batsmen may
strike the ball anywhere they like, including behind themselves. The edge of the field is defined as the **boundary**.

**Batting**

The central focus of batting is to score runs without getting out. There are 6 ways of getting out in cricket; a batsman who incurs any of them is out and will not bat again in the game. The outs are described in the section on bowling. It is important to note that even if the batsman hits the ball, he/she **does not have to run**.

**Scoring Runs**

1) The simplest way to score runs is to run between the wickets. After the ball has been struck, the striker must run to the crease on the opposite side of him, as the non-striker does the same. If both batsmen reach the crease opposite, **1 run** is scored. Running back will score a second run, and so on so forth.

2) Boundaries— a ball struck to the boundary scores automatic runs, but running between the wickets will not add to them
   a. A ball that touches the ground on its way to the boundary will score **4 runs**
b. A ball that goes over the boundary without touching the ground scores **6 runs**. A 6 is the highest number of runs a batsman can get of a single ball

**Bowling**

Bowling is a complicated art. The goal of a bowler is *dismiss* a batsman, using the 6 outs of cricket.

The ball must be delivered with a **straight arm**. Bending at the elbow once the bowler enters of the delivery stride will result in an illegal ball. Bowlers generally run towards the pitch before hopping onto one foot and bringing the shoulder of the bowling arm all the way around to release the ball towards the batsman. The ball almost always bounces before it reaches the batsmen.
The Modes of Dismissal (Outs):

A bowler may get a batsman out via:

1) Bowled out- hitting the wickets with the ball
2) Caught out- a fielder catches the ball that has been hit by a batsman before it touches the ground
3) LBW (Leg Before Wicket)- if a ball that would have gone and hit the wickets is blocked by the batsman’s body (before the ball has touched the bat) the batsman is out
4) Run out- when a batsman attempts a run, a fielder may throw the fielded ball at the set of wickets that the batsman is running towards. If the ball hit the wickets before the batsman reaches the crease, he is out
5) Stumped Out- If a batsman steps out of his crease while attempting to hit the ball but misses, the wicket-keeper may hit the wickets with the collected ball before the batsman steps into his crease again; if done, the batsman is out
6) Hit Wicket- if the batsman hits the wicket with his body or his bat, he is out

Illegal Balls:

1) Wide- a wide ball is adjudged to be outside the batsman’s strike zone; a wide ball doesn’t count towards the over and awards the batting side 1 run
   a. If a batsman hit the ball that otherwise would be wide, it cannot be a wide anymore
   b. A batsman may be stumped or run out from a wide
2) No ball-
   a. Front Foot No Ball- A front foot no ball is called when the bowler keeps no part of his front foot behind the crease at the bowling end
   b. Waist High No Ball- A ball thrown at the batsman above the waist (with the ball not bouncing before it reaches the batsman) is a no ball
   c. Throwing- if the bowler bends his elbow while bowling the ball, it is a no ball
   d. All no balls result in 1 run being awarded to the batsman, and the ball does not count to the over. A batsman may only be run out on a no ball of any type

**Fielding and Wicket-Keeping**

The wicket-keeper acts like a catcher in baseball. It is his job to catch balls that the batsman doesn’t hit. Balls which the wicket-keeper fails to collect will often go for byes (runs not credited to the batsman) since the batsman may run on any ball, even if he hasn’t hit it. The wicketkeeper is the only member of the fielding team allowed to wear gloves.
There are over 50 regulation fielding positions in cricket. The captain of the fielding side must choose 9 of them at a given time. Fielding positions are fluid and may change any time as the captain shuffles his fielders to better contain runs or take wickets.