

HISTORY OF CRICKET

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Introduction

Today Cricket is one of the most popular games played in India. Although at international level only twelve-thirteen nations play cricket, in India it has become a craze. We can say that every third person in India is in cricket fever and the impact of this game is prominently evident at all spheres of our society which influences socially, psychologically and economically, since every youngster wants to be a cricketer.

Not because of simply popularity and enjoyment, in this game, one gets good returns in the form of goods and fetches handful of money from sponsors and advertisers, receives more prestige in society and avails jobs in the private institutions/industries for future establishment. We, therefore, are witnessing in every corner of India a large number of youngsters practicing Cricket with the dream that one day he should be the part of Indian Cricket.

The level of competitions in Cricket has gone high to such an extent that simply when there is a selection trial for composing a University team (consisting of 16 players only), generally more than 200 players appear in selection trials. Dealing with such a large number of players in selection trials is not only a difficult job, but also may create a serious problem in dejecting efficient players from the team, since the selectors or a coaches did not have a scientific as well as reliable and valid criteria/norms on the basis of which the players should be selected.

Moreover, there is neither uniformity in selecting players for varsity level Cricket and nor the selection procedure is found accurate. And this is happening in every sphere of Indian Cricket. Therefore, world class performance at varsity level cricket is meager.

Although, a few Indian players establishes popularity in international Cricket, we need to go far ahead by avoiding mere politics in sports and by establishing a new as well as scientific criteria for selecting players.

To fulfill these challenges, it is necessary to establish research-based norms so that the selectors and coaches can select the talented and best potential available at varsity level.

This research study, therefore, conducted by investigator to form certain norms/criteria for selecting Cricket players at University level.

Basics of Indian Cricket

Cricket is a sport played with a ball and bat by two teams of usually 11 players each, on a large field centering upon two wickets each defended by a batsman.

History of sports reveals that the game "Cricket" was played in Kent as early as 1300. The first preserved cricket score and earliest code of laws date back to 1744.

In 1873 the official county championships begin in England and it became an international game with the formation of the imperial Cricket conference (I.C.C.) in 1909.

The British brought Cricket to Indian subcontinent in 18th century. By the beginning the game was played amongst the British. By the beginning of 19th century, the local population also started taking interest in the game particularly in the cities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras (presently, renamed as Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai respectively).

India played its first official test against England in 1932 and since then India is playing a number of official test matches against England, Australia, Pakistan, New Zealand, West Indies and many other countries.

Although Cricket is popular in the urban areas, its attraction in village areas of India is also remarkably high. India has produced several great cricketers like Lala Amarnath, Sunil Gavaskar, Kapil Dev, Sachin Tendulkar and many others.

Many countries, where cricket is popular, hold one or more championship series for the best teams. These series include the County Championship in England, the Sheffield Shield in Australia, the Shell series in New Zealand, the Currie Cup in South Africa, and the Ranji Trophy in India.

In the cricket, batting, bowling & fielding are the main fundamentals. A batsman shall play the ball with his bat. Runs awarded to the batsman are made from the bat, which includes the hands holding the bat and batting gloves. Runs made in other ways are known as byes, no balls, and wide.

The fielder can catch the ball when struck by a batsman in which case the batsman is deemed caught. The catcher must be inside the field of play at the time he makes the catch.

Bowlers try to deliver the ball so it bounces a short distance in front of the batsman. Such a delivery is difficult to hit because the batsman is uncertain whether to play forward or back. In addition, bowlers try to get batsman out by changing the direction of the ball. Bowlers change direction by controlling speed and by gripping and spinning the ball in special ways. They can thus make the ball curve (change direction in flight) or break (change direction after bounce).

Although game situation in Cricket can suddenly change the fate of a team, still the players, especially the bowlers must possess some basic qualities like speed, accuracy, eye hand coordination

and catching ability. Today's scientific training, although helps to improve all these qualities of bowlers, still it is assumed the role of Yoga may be more impressive and effective in cricket.

Brief History of Cricket¹

Origin

No one knows when or where cricket began but there is a body of evidence, much of it circumstantial, that strongly suggests the game was devised during Saxon or Norman times by children living in the Weald, an area of dense woodlands and clearings in south-east England that lies across Kent and Sussex. It is generally believed that cricket survived as a children's game for many centuries before it was increasingly taken up by adults around the beginning of the 17th century.

Derivation of the name of "cricket"

A number of words are thought to be possible sources for the term *cricket*, which could refer to the bat or the wicket. In old French, the word *criquet* meant a kind of club which probably gave its name to croquet. Some believe that cricket and croquet have a common origin. In Flemish, *krick(e)* means a stick, and, in Old English, *cricc* or *cryce* means a crutch or staff (though the hard "k" sound suggests the North or Northeast midlands, rather than the Southeast, where cricket seems to have begun).

Alternatively, the French *criquet* apparently comes from the Flemish word *krickstoel*, which is a long low stool on which one kneels in church which may appear similar to the long low wicket with two stumps used in early cricket, or the early stool in stoolball. The word *stool* is old Sussex dialect for a tree stump, and *stool ball* is a sport similar to cricket played by the Dutch and otherwise considered a precursor to cricket, rounders and baseball.

First definite reference

Despite many prior suggested references, the first definite reference to the game is found in a 1597 court case concerning dispute over a school's ownership of a plot of land. A 59-year old coroner,

¹ www.wikipedia.com

John Derrick, testified that he and his school friends had played *kreckett* on the site fifty years earlier. The school was the Royal Grammar School, Guildford, and Mr Derrick's account proves beyond reasonable doubt that the game was being played in Surrey in 1550.

The first reference to it being played as an adult sport was in 1611, when two men in Sussex were prosecuted for playing cricket on Sunday instead of going to church. In the same year, a dictionary defines cricket as a boys' game and this suggests that adult participation was a recent development.

Early Seventeenth Century

A number of references occur up to the English Civil War and these indicate that it had become an adult game contested by parish teams, but there is no evidence of county strength teams at this time. Equally, there is little evidence of the rampant gambling that characterised the game throughout the 18th century. It is generally believed, therefore, that "village cricket" had developed by the middle of the 17th century but that county cricket had not and that investment in the game had not begun.

Cricket moves out of England

Cricket was introduced to North America via the English colonies in the 17th century, probably before it had even reached the north of England. In the 18th century it arrived in other parts of the globe. It was introduced to the West Indies by colonists and to India by East India Company mariners in the first half of the century. It arrived in Australia almost as soon as colonisation began in 1788. New Zealand and South Africa followed in the early years of the 19th century.

Development of the Laws

The basic rules of cricket such as bat and ball, the wicket, pitch dimensions, overs, how out, etc. have existed since time immemorial. In 1727, we first hear of "Articles of Agreement" to determine the code of practice in a particular game and this became a common feature, especially around payment of stake money and distributing the winnings given the importance of gambling. In 1744, the Laws of Cricket were codified for the first time and then amended in 1774, when innovations such as lbw, middle stump and maximum bat width were added. These law stated that 'the principals shall choose from amongst the gentleman present two umpires who shall absolutely decide all disputes.' The codes were drawn up by the so-called "Star and Garter Club" whose members ultimately founded MCC at

Lord's in 1787. MCC immediately became the custodian of the Laws and has made periodic revisions subsequently.

The game continued to spread throughout England and, in 1751, Yorkshire is first mentioned as a venue. The original form of bowling (i.e., rolling the ball along the ground as in bowls) was superseded sometime after 1760 when bowlers began to pitch the ball and study variations in line, length and pace. Scorecards began to be kept on a regular basis from 1772 and since then we have an increasingly clear picture of the sport's development.

The first ever international cricket game was between the USA and Canada in 1844. The match was played at Elysian Fields, Hoboken, New Jersey In 1859, a team of leading English professionals set off to North America on the first-ever overseas tour. In 1864, another bowling revolution resulted into the legalization of over arm. The "Great Cricketer", W G Grace, made his debut the same year.

In 1877, an England touring team in Australia played two matches against full Australian XIs that are now regarded as the inaugural Test matches. The following year, the Australians toured England for the first time and were a spectacular success. No Tests were played on that tour but more soon followed and, at The Oval in 1882, arguably the most famous match of all time gave rise to The Ashes. South Africa became the third Test nation in 1889.

The County Championship

A major watershed occurred in 1890 when the County Cricket Championship was formally constituted for the first time to replace the *ad hoc* championship criteria that had been used hitherto. The period from 1890 to the outbreak of the First World War has become especially nostalgic, ostensibly because the teams played cricket according to "the spirit of the game". In reality, this nostalgia was due to the sense of loss brought about by the war. But the era has been called "The Golden Age of Cricket" and it featured numerous great names such as Wilfred Rhodes, C B Fry, K S Ranjitsinhji and Victor Trumper.

Balls per over

In 1889 the immemorial four ball over was replaced by a five ball over and then this was changed to the current six balls an over in 1900. Subsequently, some countries experimented with eight

balls an over. In 1922, the number of balls per over was changed from six to eight in Australia only. In 1924 the eight ball over was extended to New Zealand and in 1937 to South Africa. In England, the eight ball over was adopted experimentally for the 1939 season; the intention was to continue the experiment in 1940, but first-class cricket was suspended for the Second World War and when it resumed, English cricket reverted to the six ball over. The 1947 Laws of Cricket allowed six or eight balls depending on the conditions of play. Since the 1979/80 Australian and New Zealand seasons, the six ball over has been used worldwide and the most recent version of the Laws in 2000 only permits six ball overs.

Twentieth Century cricket

Growth of Test cricket

India, West Indies and New Zealand became Test nations before the Second World War and Pakistan soon afterwards. The international game grew with several "affiliate nations" getting involved and, in the closing years of the 20th century, three of those became Test nations also: Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and Bangladesh.

Test cricket remained the most popular form of the sport throughout the 20th century but it had its problems, never more so than in the infamous "Bodyline Series" of 1932/33 when Douglas Jardine's England used so-called "leg theory" to try and neutralise the run-scoring brilliance of Australia's Don Bradman.

Limited overs cricket

In the 1960s, English county teams began playing a version of cricket with games of only one innings each and a maximum number of overs per innings. Starting in 1963 as a knockout competition only, limited overs grew in popularity and in 1969 a national league was created which consequently caused a reduction in the number of matches in the County Championship.

Although many "traditional" cricket fans objected to the shorter form of the game, limited over cricket did have the advantage of delivering a result to spectators within a single day; it did improve cricket's appeal to younger or busier people; and it did prove commercially successful.

The first limited over international match took place at Melbourne Cricket Ground in 1971 as a time-filler after a Test match had been abandoned because of heavy rain on the opening days. It was tried simply as an experiment and to give the players some exercise, but turned out to be immensely popular. Limited-over internationals (LOIs or ODIs, after One-day Internationals) have since grown to become a massively popular form of the game, especially for busy people who want to be able to see a whole match. The International Cricket Council reacted to this development by organising the first Cricket World Cup in England in 1975, with all the Test playing nations taking part.