

**ECB Fast Bowling – Match Directives**

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| **Age Groups** | **MAXIMUM Overs per Spell** | **MAXIMUM**  **Overs per Day** |
| Age up to 13 | 5 | 10 |
| Age group Under 14’s & Under 15’s | 6 | 12 |
| Age group Under 16/17/18 & Under 19’s | 7 | 18 |

* For guidance it is recommended that in any seven-day period a fast bowler should not bowl more than four days in that period and for a maximum of two days in a row.
* For the purpose of these Directives a fast bowler is defined as a bowler to whom a wicket keeper in the same age group would in normal circumstances stand back to take the ball.
* Having completed a spell, the bowler cannot bowl again, from either end, until the same number of overs have been bowled from the same end.
* A bowler can change ends without ending his current spell provided that he bowls the next over that he legally can from the other end. If this does not happen his spell is deemed to be concluded.
* If play is interrupted, for any reason, for less than 40 minutes any spell in progress at the time of the interruption can be continued after the interruption up to the maximum number of overs for the appropriate age group. If the spell is not continued after the interruption the bowler cannot bowl again until the same number of overs he completed in that spell have been bowled from that end. If the interruption is of 40 minutes or more, whether scheduled or not, the bowler can commence a new spell immediately.
* Once a bowler covered by these Directives has bowled in a match he cannot exceed the maximum number overs per day for his age group even if he subsequently bowls spin.
* He can exceed the maximum overs per spell if bowling spin but cannot then revert to bowling fast until an equivalent number of overs to the length of his spell have been bowled from the same end. If he bowls spin without exceeding the maximum number of overs in a spell the maximum will apply as soon as he reverts to bowling fast.
* For guidance it is recommended that in any 7-day period a fast bowler should not bowl more than 4 days in that period and for a maximum of 2 days in a row.
* Age groups are based on the age of the player at midnight on 31st August in the year preceding the current season.
* Captains, Team Managers, Welfare Officers and Umpires are asked to ensure that these Directives are followed at all times. Any reference to “he/his” should be interpreted to include “she/her”.

Overbowling

This is an important consideration especially for young bowlers whose bodies are not fully developed. Recent studies have revealed that overbowling is a common cause of back injuries. Evidence suggests that much of the damage occurs early in the playing career, especially during growth spurts, though the effects do not often show themselves until the late teens. The more talented and more physically mature youngsters are generally most at risk, as they tend to play at more than one age group level.

To ensure that young fast bowlers do not place undue stress on their bodies, every attempt must be made to keep the amount of bowling within reasonable limits. The following Directives provide sensible playing and training levels.

**NETS**

Outdoor:  
The emphasis on all nets should be quality rather than quantity. These Directives will encourage young fast bowlers to focus their efforts on shorter, more intensive spells. Consequently young fast bowlers should be made aware of the importance of warming up and warming down as part of their preparation.

Indoor:  
In the period between the end of the cricket season and Christmas, indoor practise for fast bowlers should be kept to an ABSOLUTE MINIMUM. The following highlights the risk of playing/practising on hard surfaces such as solid concrete and shows how these forces can be reduced by using appropriate mats or indeed by practising on grass. Concrete offers 0% force absorption whereas grass can offer up to 75%. The 34% offered by natural turf was measured at Trent Bridge on a rock hard Test Match pitch. These figures have major implications for limiting indoor work in the winter, particularly for seamers, and for ensuring that length and intensity of sessions are considered when working on the harder surfaces.