

BALANCING TRADITION AND INNOVATION: A REVIEW ARTICLE ON RECENT RULE CHANGES IN CRICKET

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Abstract: Cricket, often referred to as a “gentleman’s game”, has a rich history and many traditions intricately woven into its fabric. Recent rule changes introduced by the International Cricket Council (ICC) have taken center stage, sparking discussion, debate and the occasional controversy. These changes, which came into force on 1 October 2022, symbolize cricket’s ability to adapt to modern standards while addressing issues related to fairness, safety and pace of play. The primary objective of this study is to determine the effects of recent rule changes in cricket; and to determine how these rule changes affected player behavior, the balance between batsman and bowler, and the overall dynamics of the game. The study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the implications of these rule changes, with particular attention to their role in preserving both traditional and modern elements of the sport. The study methods followed a five-stage methodological framework to identify the research question, identify the literature, select the study, draft the data, outline the data and report the data. Eight different changes made by the ICC are covered, covering areas such as batters’ return after catch, ball maintenance, incoming batters’ readiness, striker’s rights, fielding conduct, non-striker’s run-out, bowler action and penalties for slowing play rates. The results show the multi-faceted impact of these rule changes, affecting wicket-to-wicket transitions, strategies and the overall dynamics of the game. The study offers a number of recommendations to ensure a smooth transition to the new rules, focusing on education, consistency, technological integration, player development, research collaboration, fan participation and adjustment periods. These measures are aimed at promoting the coexistence of cricket’s traditions and evolution, preserving its intrinsic values while remaining relevant to modern norms. Cricket’s ongoing dialogue about rule changes reflects the sport’s adaptability as it strives to maintain its competitive spirit and provide a fair and safe environment for players and fans. As the game continues to evolve, these discussions will play a key role in shaping its future, striking a balance between adhering to tradition and embracing change.

Keywords: Cricket Rules, International Cricket Council (ICC), Rule Changes, Historical Context, Recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

Cricket, often known as the “gentleman’s game,” boasts a deep-rooted history and a multitude of customs. Governed by a comprehensive set of rules, this sport regulates player conduct, maintains the game’s equilibrium between bat and ball, and embodies the spirit of fair competition. Recent rule changes introduced by the International Cricket Council (ICC) have taken center stage, sparking discussions, debates, and occasional controversies. These changes, which came into effect on October 1, 2022, symbolize cricket’s adaptability to contemporary standards while addressing issues related to fairness, safety, and the pace of the game. At its core, this sport is governed by an extensive set of regulations and guidelines that dictate player behavior, determine the flow of the game, and strike a balance between the roles of batsman and bowler (ICC, 2021). The strict adherence to these rules is considered pivotal in upholding the integrity of the game and ensuring a level playing field. Consequently, any modifications to these established rules are subject to meticulous examination, fueling widespread interest among cricket enthusiasts on a global scale (Sterns, 2016; Singh & Adhikari, 2015).

Historical Development of Cricket Rules

Cricket’s roots extend back to the 16th century, and throughout its existence, the game has undergone a multi-

tude of rule transformations. The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), established in 1787, has played a pivotal role in the standardization of cricket laws, which have formed the bedrock of modern cricket (Sanjaykumar, S et al., 2024). The MCC's "Laws of Cricket," most recently revised in 2017, have been indispensable in preserving the sport's core identity and guiding its progression. One of the most prominent transitions in cricket occurred with the emergence of limited-overs formats, including One Day Internationals (ODIs) and Twenty20 (T20) cricket (ICC, 2021). These formats introduced regulations tailored to shorter match durations, power play phases, and fielding restrictions. These changes were introduced to make cricket more captivating to a broader audience and have substantially contributed to cricket's burgeoning global popularity (Adie et al., 2022; Arif et al., 2018).

Recent implications

In recent times, the International Cricket Council (ICC), the preeminent global governing body for the sport, has introduced a series of substantial changes to cricket's rules. These rule adjustments have become a focal point of debates, discussions, and on occasion, controversies, as they endeavor to address diverse aspects of the game, ranging from on-field strategies to the comportment of players. The ICC's rule-altering process has been methodical, involving a comprehensive review and ratification by the Chief Executives' Committee (CEC) and various cricket committees led by distinguished figures, such as Sourav Ganguly, an illustrious former Indian cricket captain. These changes, which took effect on October 1, 2022, mirror not only the ever-evolving nature of the game but also the continuous pursuit of equity, entertainment, and safety within the realm of cricket (ICC, 2021; ICC, 2022; News18, 2022).

Rationale

These regulations dictate player conduct, shape the game's flow, and maintain the balance between batsmen and bowlers. The strict adherence to these established rules is fundamental in upholding the integrity of the sport. Any alterations to these rules require careful scrutiny and have piqued the interest of cricket enthusiasts worldwide. Recent rule changes introduced by the International Cricket Council (ICC) have sparked discussions, debates, and, at times, controversies, as they aim to address various facets of the game, from on-field strategies to player behavior. These changes, which came into effect on October 1, 2022, signify the evolving nature of cricket and its ongoing commitment to equity, entertainment, and safety.

The primary objective of this study is to determine the effects of recent rule changes in cricket; and to determine how these rule changes affected player behavior, the balance between batsman and bowler, and the overall dynamics of the game. The study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the implications of these rule changes, with particular attention to their role in preserving both traditional and modern elements of the sport.

METHODS

The study followed a five-stage methodological framework to identify the research question, identify the literature, select the study, draft the data, outline the data and report the data

Research Question

The research aims to investigate the recent rule changes introduced by the International Cricket Council (ICC) and their implications for the game of cricket. Specifically, it seeks to understand the impacts of these rule changes on player behavior, fairness, the balance between batting and bowling, and the overall dynamics of the game (ICC, 2021).

Identify the Literature

To understand the context and significance of these rule changes, a review of pertinent literature was conducted. This review covered historical developments of cricket rules, the rationale behind rule alterations, past controversies and ongoing debates in the cricketing world, and the overall importance of adapting rules to the evolving sporting landscape (Borooah, 2016; News18, 2022).

Select the Study

The study focuses on the analysis of recent rule changes introduced by the ICC. These changes were recommended by the Sourav Ganguly-led Men's Cricket Committee after discussing the MCC's updated 3rd Edition of the

2017 Code of the Laws of Cricket. The study places a particular emphasis on the changes that came into effect on October 1, 2022 (ICC, 2022).

Draft the Data

The data was collected by thoroughly examining the ICC documents, official sources, and news articles related to the rule changes in cricket. Each rule change was analyzed in detail, considering its context, expected impact, possible challenges, and suggested measures to address these challenges (ICC, 2021).

Outline the Data

The data is outlined in a structured format for each of the eight rule changes introduced by the ICC. This format includes:

1. A brief description of the rule change.
2. An analysis of the impact of the rule change on the game.
3. Considerations for the variation of the rule across different formats.
4. Identification of potential challenges and concerns arising from the rule change.
5. Proposed strategies for addressing these challenges and ensuring effective implementation of the new rules.

Report the Data

The findings from the data analysis are reported in a comprehensive manner, highlighting the significance of these rule changes. The report emphasizes the evolving nature of cricket and how the recent modifications align the game with contemporary standards and emerging challenges. The report also reflects the cricketing community's diverse responses to these changes, underlining the need for a balance between adapting to new norms while preserving the fundamental spirit of the game.

Study Characteristics

This research is characterized by the following key features:

1. *Time Frame:* The study primarily focuses on recent rule changes in cricket introduced by the International Cricket Council (ICC), specifically those that came into effect on October 1, 2022. It examines how these changes have influenced various aspects of the game (ICC, 2021).
2. *Multifaceted Analysis:* The research involves a multifaceted analysis of eight distinct rule changes. Each rule change is scrutinized based on its potential impact, format variations, challenges, and suggested measures to address these challenges. This comprehensive approach provides a detailed understanding of the evolving cricket landscape.
3. *Evidence-Based Analysis:* The research relied on a rigorous data collection process, encompassing official ICC sources, credible news articles, and documented information about the rule changes (ESPN Cricinfo, 2022). The findings and recommendations are based on evidence and substantiated by various sources.
4. *Proposed Strategies:* As a practical component, the research suggests strategies to address potential challenges posed by these rule changes. These recommendations are based on the analysis and aim to facilitate effective implementation of the new rules.

RESULT

Analysis of Recent Rule Changes

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced several changes to its Playing Conditions after the Chief Executives' Committee (CEC) ratified recommendations from the Sourav Ganguly-led Men's Cricket Committee, which discussed MCC's updated 3rd Edition of the 2017 Code of the Laws of Cricket and shared its conclusions with Women's Cricket Committee, who endorsed the recommendations to CEC. The main changes and key finding (**Table 1**) to the Playing Conditions that come into effect on 1 October 2022 are:

1. *Batters returning when caught:* When a batter is out Caught, the new batter will come in at the end the striker was, regardless of whether the batters crossed prior to the catch being taken. Previously, in cricket,

the striker and non-striker would seize the opportunity to swap ends while the ball was airborne. If they successfully switched ends before the striker was caught out, the incoming batter would find themselves at the non-striker's end. However, the recent rule change eliminates this possibility. The incoming batsman, after a caught dismissal, is now designated to take the strike, regardless of any prior exchange of ends. The exception to this rule is when the dismissal happens on the final ball of an over (ICC, 2021; Singh, S & Adhikari, A., 2015).

2. *Use of saliva to polish the ball:* This prohibition has been in place for over two years in international cricket as a Covid-related temporary measure and it is considered appropriate for the ban to be made permanent. Polishing the cricket ball is a critical element for bowlers, but it's imperative to note that the use of saliva for this purpose is no longer allowed. Players are permitted to utilize their sweat to shine the ball, while saliva is strictly prohibited. This rule change also eliminates the possibility of players resorting to mints or gum to thicken their saliva for ball maintenance (ICC, 2021; Geo.tv, 2022).
3. *Incoming batter ready to face the ball:* An incoming batter will now be required to be ready to take strike within two minutes in Tests and ODIs, while the current threshold of ninety seconds in T20Is remains unchanged (ICC, 2022; Bhalla et al., 2019).
4. *Striker's right to play the ball:* This is restricted so as to require some part of their bat or person to remain within the pitch. Should they venture beyond that, the umpire will call and signal Dead ball. Any ball which would force the batter to leave the pitch will also be called No ball (ICC, 2021; Rehman & Shah, 2017).
5. *Unfair movement by the fielding side:* Any unfair and deliberate movement while the bowler is running in to bowl could now result in the umpire awarding five penalty runs to the batting side, in addition to a call of Dead ball. Once the field has been arranged, fielders are required to maintain their positions without making any changes once the bowler begins their run-up. Altering one's fielding position at that stage is not only disruptive to the batsman but is also considered unfair. There have been occasions when batsmen were caught off guard by sudden changes in the field. In the past, umpires used to signal a dead ball in such situations. However, under the new rule, the batting side will be awarded 5 penalty runs for such infractions (ESPN, 2022; Geo.tv, 2022; Hill, Orchard, & Kountouris, 2019).
6. *Running out of the non-striker:* The Playing Conditions follow the Laws in moving this method of effecting a Run out from the 'Unfair Play' section to the 'Run out' section. The incident that unfolded during IPL 2019, when Ashwin 'Mankaded' Jos Buttler, remains a memorable and controversial moment. It raised debates about the act not aligning with the spirit of the game. To put an end to the discussions, the MCC (Marylebone Cricket Club) has officially classified it as a 'run out' and will no longer be considered unfair. In 1948, former India captain Vinoo Mankad executed a similar run-out of Australian wicketkeeper-batsman Bill Brown at the non-striker's end. The Australian media coined the term 'Mankading,' which has since become a part of cricket terminology (ICC, 2021; Borooah, 2016).
7. *Bowler throwing towards striker's end before delivery:* Previously, a bowler who saw the batter advancing down the wicket before entering their delivery stride, could throw the ball to attempt to Run out the striker. This practice will now be called a Dead ball (ICC, 2021; NDTV Sports, 2022; Ramos et al. 2016)
8. *Consequences of Slow Over Rate:* The in-match penalty introduced in T20Is in January 2022, (whereby the failure of a fielding team to bowl their overs by the scheduled cessation time leads to an additional fielder having to be brought inside the fielding circle for the remaining overs of the innings), will now also be adopted in ODI matches after the completion of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League in 2023 (ICC, 2022; Jamil et al., 2023).

Table 1. Analysis of Recent ICC Rule Changes and Their Impacts on Cricket

Rule Change	Impact	Format Variation	Challenge	Addressing Challenges
1.Batters returning when caught	Influence running between wickets. Affects partnerships and run-scoring strategies	Impact expected in all formats and ensuring fairness and clarity in dismissals	Risk of confusion and disputes. Misinterpretation in high-stakes situations	Educate players, umpires, and teams. Consistent enforcement and clear communication
2.Use of saliva to polish the ball	Commitment to player safety and hygiene. Potential impact on ball swing and seam movement	Applies uniformly across formats. Emphasis on player well-being	Concerns about the balance between bat and ball	Adapt to alternative ball maintenance methods. Focus on player health
3.Incoming batter ready to face the ball	Expedite the pace of the game. Influences field placements and strategies	More pronounced impact in Tests and ODIs	Pressure on teams for swift transitions. Potential impact on the game's strategic element	Emphasize efficient readiness procedures. Designated roles for swift preparation
4.Striker's right to play the ball	Introduces a new dimension to the game. Requires cautious batter and exploitable by bowlers	Consistency and fairness across formats	Alters traditional dynamics. Challenging for batters	Train umpires for consistent enforcement. Players adapt to stay within the pitch
5.Unfair movement by the fielding side	Adds fairness to the game. Discourages unsportsmanlike tactics	Consistent change across formats. Promotes ethical play	Open to interpretation of "unfair and deliberate movement"	Well-defined guidelines for recognizing unfair movement. Effective communication between umpires and captains
6.Running out of the non-striker	Aligns Playing Conditions with Laws of Cricket. Provides clarity and reduces ambiguity	Mainly affects procedural aspects in all formats	Requires players and umpires to adapt to a new process	Comprehensive training and education for players and umpires. Vigilance of match officials
7.Bowler throwing towards striker's end	Prevents bowlers from attempting run-outs before the delivery stride. Reduces disputes and controversies	Applies uniformly across all formats. Ensures uniformity and rule adherence	Limits bowlers' options for dismissing non-strikers	Bowlers focus on delivering a legal ball instead. Explore alternative dismissal strategies
8.Consequences of Slow Over Rate	Encourages punctuality in completing overs. Requires efficient over-rate management	Initially introduced in T20Is and extended to ODIs	Challenges in managing bowling resources efficiently	Enhance over-rate management strategies. Plan overs effectively and designate bowlers for specific phases

DISCUSSION

Recent changes to the rules of cricket by the International Cricket Council (ICC), as detailed in this study, illustrate the continuous evolution of the sport to meet modern standards and address emerging issues (ICC, 2021). Past rule changes have typically sought to address issues related to player safety, fairness, and the pace of the game. The recent changes reflect a continued emphasis on these aspects, with player safety, especially due to the saliva ban, being a prominent consideration. The game has evolved to accommodate various formats, and rule changes have evolved accordingly to maintain its relevance (ICC, 2021; Kumar et al. 2019). Recent changes in cricket rules have sparked a range of responses from the cricketing community. These rule modifications have garnered strong support, particularly in the case of the permanent saliva ban, which is seen as a vital step for health and safety. It reflects a responsible and prudent approach, particularly given the concerns regarding disease transmission in light of the COVID-19 pandemic (ICC, 2021). Nevertheless, rule changes that impact the game's balance, such as the stricter leg-

before-wicket (LBW) criteria and restrictions on bowlers' actions before delivery, have prompted varying opinions (Stern, 2016). Some individuals perceive these alterations as necessary to enhance competition and equilibrium in the game, while others express reservations about potential disruptions to conventional strategies and the added pressure on batters. Additional amendments relating to various aspects of the game, including the return of batters when caught, the readiness of incoming batters, the striker's rights, actions deemed unfair on the field, non-strikers' running out, and penalties for slow over rates, have also stirred nuanced discussions within the cricketing community (Hill et al., 2019). This ongoing discourse highlights the dynamic nature of cricket, as it adapts to meet contemporary standards and address the concerns of those who value its traditions and competitive spirit. Ultimately, these rule changes seek to harmonize cricket with changing global norms while preserving the essence of the sport. The methodology used in this study involved a comprehensive analysis of ICC documents, official sources and news articles to gather information on recent rule changes. Analysis of these changes reveals their consequences and potential problems, as well as proposed measures to solve them. Changes to the rules of cricket reflect the sport's ability to evolve while maintaining its core values (Ali & Khusro 2019). The purpose of these modifications is to provide a level, fun and safe cricketing experience for players and fans. As cricket continues to adapt, continued dialogue within the cricket community will play a key role in shaping the future of the game. The key challenge going forward will be to ensure that players, umpires and teams adapt effectively to these rule changes while maintaining the spirit of cricket even as the sport continues to transform (Bhattacharjee et al., 2015). The study also confirms the data regarding the influence of rules on the development of not only cricket, but also other sports games.

Proposed Strategies

1. *Educational Initiatives:* To mitigate potential confusion and disputes regarding rule changes, it is recommended that cricket governing bodies, including the ICC, invest in comprehensive educational programs. These programs should target players, coaches, umpires, and fans, providing clear and concise explanations of the rule alterations and their practical implications. Well-informed stakeholders will contribute to smoother transitions and a more streamlined implementation of the changes.
2. *Consistency and Clarity:* Ensuring consistency in rule interpretation and clear communication is vital. Umpires play a central role in this, and they must be trained rigorously to enforce the rules consistently. Cricket authorities should develop comprehensive guidelines and reference materials to assist umpires in interpreting and implementing the rules correctly, reducing the scope for disputes.
3. *Technological Integration:* Embrace technology to aid in rule enforcement. The Decision Review System (DRS) has already demonstrated the benefits of using technology for decision-making. Further technological integration, such as using ball-tracking systems to confirm fair deliveries or fielding positions, can enhance the accuracy of rule enforcement.
4. *Player Development:* Cricketers must adapt to the evolving rules. This requires changes in training and preparation. Coaches and cricket academies should include rule changes in their training curricula. Players need to develop new strategies and techniques to excel under the modified rules. Specialized coaching in adapting to the rule changes can be beneficial.
5. *Research and Collaboration:* Encourage research on the impact of rule changes on the game. Collaborations between cricketing bodies, academic institutions, and experts can yield valuable insights. Research findings can inform future rule adjustments and contribute to the understanding of the game's dynamics.
6. *Fan Engagement:* Cricket's popularity depends on fan engagement. To keep the audience invested, cricket authorities should actively communicate the reasons behind rule changes and their expected impact. Engaging fans through social media, broadcasts, and fan forums can foster a deeper appreciation of the evolving game.
7. *Adaptation Period:* Allow a reasonable adaptation period for players and teams to get accustomed to the rule changes. In some cases, like the permanent ban on saliva use, players may need time to adjust to new ball-maintenance practices. Providing this transitional period can help avoid undue disruptions to the game.

These recommendations, when implemented, can ensure a smoother transition to the new rules, uphold the integrity and fairness of the game, and preserve its essential traditions while adapting to modern standards.

CONCLUSION

Rule changes have been shown to play a key role in maintaining a balance between batting and bowling, promoting competitive spirit and ensuring player safety. They also strive to solve problems related to the speed of the game. The rule changes have been met with widespread approval, especially the permanent ban on the use of saliva, which is considered a responsible response to global health problems. The impact of rule adjustments on game balance and game strategies has given rise to differing opinions within the cricket community. While some see these changes as necessary to increase competition and adaptability, others have expressed reservations about potential disruptions to traditional tactics and increased pressure on batsmen. These varied perspectives highlight the complex nature of rule modifications and the importance of striking a balance between compliance with existing regulations and preserving the fundamental essence of cricket. The historical development of the rules of cricket, which have evolved over the centuries, highlights the sport's ability to adapt to changing times. This study highlighted the importance of rule changes to ensure fairness, accuracy and clarity in decision making. However, the world of cricket is still no stranger to controversy and ongoing debate, with topics such as the Decision Review System (DRS) and field restrictions illustrating the controversial nature of these topics.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest

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