



Rules

Eligibility

N.B. Rules updated for 2025 entry

- 1** The competition shall be called 'The Voneus Village Cup'.
- 2** The competition shall be organised by The Cricketer.
- 3** The object of the competition shall be to promote village cricket and to give an opportunity to village cricketers to compete in a national event.
- 4** A village shall be deemed to be a rural community consisting of not more than 15,000 inhabitants. Exceptions can be made. Please contact The Cricketer for clarification. Note: county council figures cannot in all cases be said to represent the population, since often other villages and hamlets are put together for council purposes. When in doubt, the organisers should be consulted, including decisions about mergers. Market towns are not eligible, regardless of the population figure.
- 5** Clubs entering will be required to take an annual subscription to The Cricketer, thereby ensuring a continuous means of communication between the organisers and competitors. The subscription must be in the name of the club entering. You may transfer an existing subscription by calling 0203 1981 360. An entry form must be filled in by ALL clubs and proof of subscription provided. Failure to do so may result in your club not being entered.
- 6** All clubs in the competition are expected to uphold the Spirit of Cricket, as defined in the preamble to MCC's Laws of Cricket. Any failure to comply with the spirit of the game, as reported by the umpires and clubs, may result in the club being disqualified at any stage of the competition.
See www.lords.org for details.
- 7** Any club playing in the top division of any of the leagues shown in Schedule 1 is eligible to play in The Voneus Village Cup, providing all other rules are satisfied, but cannot field any players who have played in any such leagues in the current season (2025).
- 8** Clubs who only have artificial pitches are welcome to enter The Voneus Village Cup but will be required to play all their matches away from home or on a neutral ground that has a grass pitch.

9 (a)

(i) A player WILL be eligible to play in The Voneus Village Cup if they are a paid-up member of the club, and have played at least four non-Voneus Village Cup matches for that club since April 1 2024. A player who has joined a club in the current season (2025) will be eligible to play in The Voneus Village Cup once they have completed four Saturday league fixtures for the club. Indoor matches and intra-club matches (for example President's XI v Club XI) do not qualify. Evening fixtures can contribute towards requirements IF a player has represented the club in weekend league fixtures. Exceptions can be made for injured players and those aged 17 and under on September 1 in the current season (2025) if they are bona-fide members of the club. If in any doubt over anything in these rules, please contact The Cricketer for clarification ahead of the date of the relevant fixture.

(ii) Those who attend a school within a two-mile radius of a club can represent that club in the competition if not registered to another club. All other conditions set out in these rules must be met. The age exception referred to in rule 9ai does not apply for this rule.

(b) A player will NOT be eligible for this competition if they:

(i) Have played in the top division of any of the leagues shown in Schedule 1 in the current season (2025) – unless they are 17 or under on September 1 in the current season (2025).

(ii) Have played in at least one match for any first-class team or in any List A game, including matches played for or against any UCCE, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, in the last 25 years. An exception is made to players who have played first-class cricket exclusively for a UCCE side. Such players are eligible to play five years after their last UCCE match. An exception is also made to players who have played List A cricket exclusively for a Minor County against first-class counties before March 1 2023. (These two exceptions do not supersede any other rules regarding professional cricket.) Contact The Cricketer for clarification. The organisers' decision is final.

(iii) Have played, within the current season (2025) or 2024 season, in any match in any competitive National Counties (formerly Minor Counties) cricket – unless they are 17 or under on September 1 in the current season (2025).

(iv) Have played, within the current (2025) or immediately previous (2024) season any competitive first-class counties' Second XI cricket – unless they are 17 or under on September 1 in the current season (2025).

(v) Received a fee from any source for playing cricket in the current (2025) or immediately previous season (2024) whether in the UK or abroad.

(vi) Received expenses in connection with playing cricket from any source in excess of their necessary out-of pocket disbursements for reasonable costs of travel.

(vii) Received payment by the club (or a third party for air fare or accommodation costs). This will be considered reward for playing cricket.

(viii) Are under contract to play for a first-class county, regardless of whether they are being paid to play or not.

(ix) Are serving a ban from playing cricket for any cricket club or league.

(x) Have played for another club in The Voneus Village Cup in the current season (2025).

(c) Players from overseas are:

(i) NOT ELIGIBLE to play if they are in the UK on a short-term visa that is approved by the UK border agency, which allows the player to play cricket during his stay.

(ii) ELIGIBLE if they are a British citizen and were born in England or Wales; or they have been a resident in England or Wales since April 1 2024 for a minimum of 210 days between April 1 2024 and March 31 2025 and are a bona-fide member of the club and have played at least four non-Voneus Village Cup matches in the previous season (2024). Indoor matches, intra-club matches (for example President's XI v Club XI) do not qualify. Evening fixtures can contribute towards fixture requirements IF a player has also represented the club in weekend league fixtures. Please contact The Cricketer for any clarification.

(iii) Any player who has played in any overseas cricket league as a 'home', 'local' or 'non-overseas' player in that overseas league in the 12-month period up to and including March 31 2025 will NOT be permitted to play in the Cup in the 2025 season.

(iv) Please be aware that these definitions may be different to league rules and overseas players who are able to play in league cricket may not be eligible to play in The Voneus Village Cup. Please contact The Cricketer if you are unsure of a player's eligibility.

(d) Notwithstanding anything in these rules, the organisers' decision is final. The organisers reserve the right to decide the eligibility of any player or refuse entry to or disqualify at any time any club which they have reason to believe has not complied strictly with the letter and spirit of the rules.

Schedule 1. Exclusion list of leagues

- Airedale & Wharfedale Senior League
- Bradford Premier Cricket League
- Birmingham and District Premier Cricket League
- Central Lancashire Cricket League
- Cheshire County Cricket League
- Cornwall Cricket League
- Derbyshire Premier League
- Devon Cricket League
- Dorset Premier League
- East Anglian Premier Cricket League
- Essex Cricket League
- Greater Manchester Cricket League
- Hertfordshire Cricket League
- Home Counties Premier Cricket League
- Huddersfield Cricket League

- Kent Cricket League
- Lancashire League
- Leicestershire & Rutland Cricket League
- Lincolnshire County Board Cricket League
- Liverpool & District Cricket Competition
- Middlesex County Cricket League
- Northamptonshire Cricket League
- North East Premier Cricket League
- Northern Premier Cricket League
- North Staffs & South Cheshire League
- North Wales Premier League
- North Yorkshire & South Durham Cricket League
- Nottinghamshire Premier League
- Southern Premier Cricket League
- South Wales Premier Cricket League
- Surrey Championship
- Sussex Cricket League
- West of England Premier Cricket League
- Yorkshire Premier League North
- Yorkshire Cricket Southern Premier League

Match rules

1 The Laws of Cricket as laid down by MCC shall apply, together with the following special conditions:

(a) Games will start at 1pm unless agreed otherwise by both captains and umpires.

(b) Each side shall bat for 40 overs unless their innings is completed earlier or the captains agree to a lesser number of overs before the match.

(c) No bowler may bowl more than 8 overs. Part of an over will count as a full over only in so far as each bowler's limit is concerned. When it is agreed that a match shall consist of fewer than 40 overs, no bowler may bowl more than one fifth of the total overs to be bowled by his side.

(d) Wide ball – judging a wide: umpires are instructed to apply a very strict and consistent interpretation in regard to this Law in order to prevent negative bowling.

(e) The side which scores more runs will be the winner.

(f) If the scores are level, the side which has lost fewer wickets shall be the winner.

(g) If still equal, the side which received fewer balls at the end of the match shall be the winner (wides and no-balls do not count).

(h) If the result cannot be decided by (g), the winner shall be the side with the higher score a) after 30 overs, OR if still equal b) after 20 overs, OR if still equal c) after 10 overs. In the unlikely even of all these being equal, or if a result cannot be achieved in the match, there will be a bowl-out (outdoors or indoors) under the supervision of the umpires to determine a winner. See rule 3.

(i) If the side batting second equals its opponent's score off the last ball of the match, providing they have lost fewer wickets, then they have won the match and the ball is dead.

(j) If rain or bad light curtails play before the completion of a match, the result will be decided in favour of the side which has scored the faster runs per over THROUGHOUT THE INNINGS, provided that at least 20 overs have been bowled to the side batting second. If the scoring-rates are identical, then the side with the higher score after 20 overs shall be the winner; if still equal, the side which has lost fewer wickets over the first 20 overs shall be the winner. If still equal, the result will be decided by a bowling competition. See Rule 3.

(k) If the start of the match is delayed by the weather or if there is a subsequent interruption, the captains may agree to a lesser number of overs, the minimum being five. In quarter-final fixtures and beyond, jurisdiction is given to umpires to decide the number of overs to be played to complete a fixture which is delayed or has a subsequent interruption. Minimum of five overs per side.

(l) If a match that has started is abandoned before each side has completed 10 overs then Rule 3 applies.

(m) Exceptionally, if a match is abandoned by the umpires in the circumstances where the side batting first is all out after 10 overs, and the side batting second has scored one run fewer than the first side's completed innings total after 11 overs with no wickets lost, the side batting first shall have its total score divided by the full allotment of 40 overs to establish their run-rate.

(n) Five penalty extras shall not be awarded from the preliminary round to round 4 of the competition, with the exception of those awarded under Laws 41.2 (illegal fielding) and 41.3 (protective helmets belonging to the fielding side).

(o) ECB directives concerning young cricketers must be adhered to. This includes the

directives on young fast bowlers, fielding positions, protective helmets and the restrictions on young players in open-age cricket.

(p) All teams are required to hand a teamsheet to the umpires and/or the opposing captain before the start of play. These are to include the age of the player and whether or not they are required to wear a protective helmet.

(q) From round FIVE onwards, the following fielding restrictions shall apply:

(r) At the instant of delivery a minimum of four fielders, plus the bowler and wicketkeeper, must be within an area bounded by two semi-circles centred on each middle stump, each with a radius of 30 yards and joined by a parallel line on each side of the pitch (the fielding circle).

(ii) In the event of infringement, the square-leg umpire shall call no-ball.

(iii) The fielding circle shall be marked by painted white 'dots' at five-yard intervals, each 'dot' to be covered by a white plastic or rubber (but not metal) disc measuring seven inches in diameter.

(iv) If one or more fielders leave the field because of sustaining an obvious serious injury, and for no other reason, the minimum number of fielders required inside the circle shall be reduced correspondingly.

(s) Runners are still allowed in The Voneus Village Cup despite being banned from international cricket.

2 Matches must be played on the dates laid down in the draw. Any club unable to fulfil a fixture on the scheduled date of a match must concede the match to the other club. Should a match be rearranged for any reason other than the weather, an agreement in writing by BOTH clubs is necessary for the alternative date to be binding. Without this written agreement, the club that was unable to fulfil the original scheduled fixture must concede the match if a result cannot be reached on the alternative date. With this written agreement the club which is unable to fulfil the rearranged fixture must concede the game.

3 If rain prevents a result, the match will be replayed on the following Sunday, or an agreed earlier date. All replays will be held on the ground of the original VISITING side unless otherwise agreed, regardless of whether the match was postponed before or after the start of play. Captains may on the other hand agree to decide the result by a bowling competition. In this event, regardless of weather, each member of both teams will bowl one ball at a wicket. (NB. A wicket consists of THREE STUMPS and two bails.) The side breaking the wicket the greater number of times will be the winner. Umpires will officiate to ensure fair play (including no-balls). All players MUST bowl overarm.

4 Umpires and scorers

From the first round up to (but not including) the national quarter-finals, each team will provide an umpire. From the quarter-finals and thereafter the organisers will arrange all umpiring appointments. Each team **MUST** provide a scorer in all matches. Umpires and scorers must be DBS-checked in accordance with legal requirements. If it is not possible for a club to provide an umpire, that club can use a playing member if both captains agree. The opposition's appointed umpire is to stand at both ends, with playing members standing at square leg.

5 In every round of the competition except the final each club will provide one ball. Umpires must agree that the condition and quality of the balls are similar. Each side **MUST** bowl with the ball they provide and the home side is responsible for providing spare balls. The organisers will provide cricket balls for the final.

6 Difficulties or disputes should be referred to the organisers immediately but will only be considered if submitted in writing by a club official with a copy sent to the secretary of the other side concerned. The decision of the organisers on all matters affecting the competition, whether included in these rules or not, is final and binding.

7 Any player/players who are placed on report (in writing) by the match umpires for violating the Code of Conduct and the Spirit of Cricket will be referred to their respective cricket club and officials of the cricket league in which the players and club are associated so that an official disciplinary hearing can be conducted in accordance with the respective cricket league disciplinary code of practice. The final outcome of any disciplinary hearing will be conveyed to *The Cricketer*, along with a copy of the umpires' disciplinary report.

8 Results must be reported within 24 hours of the result being achieved (including cancellations and abandonments) via the competition website (www.nationalvillagecup.com/scores) or the club's Play Cricket site. In the event of a replay the organisers must be informed as to the agreed date and venue as soon as is practically possible.

9 The highest standards and best spirit of the game as specified in the 'Preamble to the Laws of Cricket' must be observed both on and off the field. In the unlikely event of any team failing to uphold these standards, the organisers reserve the right to disqualify them.