

I was pleased to receive fifty-seven entries to the latest Challenge, a bit of an increase from recent years, probably a reflection of the extra long hours that our members are having to fill in these peculiar times. I was especially pleased to hear from several new names as well as my many faithful regulars.

Solution

	Scratchers	Notchers
1	6	15
2	185	5
3	1	133
4	5	5
5	2	58
6	104	15
7	5	27
8	20	1
9	6	0
10	3	0
11	5	2
Extras	4	7
Total	346	268
Result:	Scratchers won by 78 runs	

As so often the first entry arrived within a few hours of its being made available – from Vijaya Mallela in Maryland, USA; and there was another from India, Suhas Sapre, both of them being error-free.

There were sixteen all-correct entries, and fewer errors than in most years. There was one question, Notchers 7 (22 errors), which caused more difficulty than most. This dealt with a relatively new law, one which we hope we shall not be involved with too often. If a player is sent off for a Level 3 offence he has to remain off the field for 20% of the total scheduled overs (40) in the innings, so in this instance he would be off for eight overs plus the remaining four balls left in the over in progress. In this example he would be off for eight overs after the end of the seventeenth over, and back at the start of the twenty-seventh over.

There were only four other questions which caused more than four errors: Notchers 11 (11 errors). If the batsmen run two and both umpires signal Short run, than only one run is deducted since it must have been the same run which was short. So in this case, there would be one No ball and one run to the striker.

Notchers 9 (10 errors) covers another recent change. If an umpire inadvertently allows an extra ball in the over and then signals Wide ball for the seventh, he is now able to, and should, call and signal over as soon as the ball is dead.

Notchers 10 (8 errors): if the striker plays no shot at a ball which strikes his pad, no runs can be scored thereafter.

Scratchers 8 (8 errors): The call of No ball always takes priority over the call of Wide ball and if the ball goes to the boundary without being touched by the striker, the scorer should record one No ball and four Byes.

There were no other questions with more than four errors.

My thanks go to all entrants, especially those who make appreciative comments – I am glad if I helped to fill a few of these long hours!

The names of Notchers' News all-correct solvers were put into the Umpire's hat and the winners drawn at random. The Notchers' News winner is **Wendy Hardy** and she has already received her £20 prize

Thank to 'The Third Umpire', John M Brown for giving his time and effort put into devising, marking and reporting on the Christmas Challenge.

Thanks also to those who took up the challenge and demonstrated their knowledge of the Laws of Cricket and scoring