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Notchers' News

ISSUE 20

DECEMBER 2012

The network for cricket scorers

This newsletter is *your* forum for sharing news and experiences, discussing scoring issues and networking.

Two scorers shall be appointedbut.....

At the post-season committee meeting of the Association of County Cricket Scorers in late September, we were astounded to be asked by the ECB for our comments on an idea, which their Cricket Committee were investigating, of making the official scorers for county cricket the home scorer and the Opta analyst. The away team scorer would be redundant.

Let me explain the background. For almost twenty years the Press Association (PA) was the official "data collector" appointed by ECB to distribute score details to the press, other media outlets like Teletext, Ceefax and then websites like Cricinfo and Cricketarchive. The data were in the main transmitted by the county scorers using laptops and software provided by PA. The scorers kept their written record at the same time. For season 2012, the ECB decided to replace PA by Optasports (Opta), a firm specialising in sporting statistics which had already made a reputation with their massively detailed Rugby statistics. Opta decided they would not use the county scorers but appoint their own team of analysts, over whom they would have full control. They also decided that in their first year they would concentrate on getting the scoring correct. For subsequent years they would add what they termed the granularity, the details for each ball of, for instance, length, line, shot played, leaves, misses, edges, where the ball went, who fielded it. In 2012, things went relatively smoothly, particularly from grounds where the Opta analyst had room to sit with the scorers and could keep a running check. At other grounds, where analysts had to sit away from the scorers but in telephone contact, checking needed to be done at intervals and particularly at the end of play, and occasionally errors crept in which needed to be corrected the following day. Any new system is bound to have teething problems, as indeed the PA system had in the early days.

After consulting all the scorers, we produced for ECB comments on the idea of making the Opta analyst one of the official scorers in 2013. We concentrated on the main problem which was that Opta were so far only half way into their task and had not shown they were able to do all that they had promised. They would be so busy adding all the granularity to their input that they would not be able to fulfil properly the role of official scorer. To change the scoring arrangements for 2013 would be premature and dangerous. Moreover, Opta had appointed their own analysts in 2012 in order to keep control; now the analysts were being asked to serve two masters. We could not imagine that Opta would be happy to take on such a second role.

We added that we would still have misgivings if Opta showed in a year's time that they had mastered their more detailed data collection task. It would still leave insufficient time, in our view, for them to be able at the same time to score officially in a proper manner in co-operation with the home scorer, particularly in moments when problems occur as they sometimes do and the official scorers need to devote their full attention to resolving them. In T20 games, in particular, an undue burden would be placed on the home scorer. It is important to remember in all this that the Opta analysts are a transitory body of mainly young men, many of whom are seeking a full-time job elsewhere. Replacements were needed last year in the course of the season, and this will, no doubt, continue to be the case. The continuity and experience of the away team scorers should not be wasted without very good reason.

The counties were also asked for their comments on the idea. We obviously do not know what they had to say but imagine that many coaches would not be happy to go without the print-outs and additional information which away scorers routinely provide, including over rates kept up to date on the scoreboard, not to mention the other admin jobs they carry out as members of the squad.

I was about to write that we await with interest the ECB's decision which should come too late to include here, but in fact it has arrived in the nick of time. The only change to be made to arrangements in 2013 is that the Opta analyst must be seated with scorers in all cases. So the two county scorers and the Opta analyst can get on with their different tasks. The matter will be reviewed at the end of 2013 but I see no reason why things should change if all goes well as it should.

Alan West, Chairman, ACCS,

28 November 2012

The newsletter can only be successful if copy is received for publication. Please submit articles, letters and questions to notchers@btopenworld.com <http://www.notchers.co.uk>

The Christmas Challenge

The Notchers have challenged the Scratchers to yet another fireside fixture this year

Readers are invited to accept the Challenge by solving the clues on pages 2 and 3 to discover how many runs each player scores. There are no trick questions and all relevant information is provided in the clues.

Normal Laws of Cricket (updated on 1st October 2010) apply (no special regulations).

You should record all these scores in batting order, and complete your solution by giving the result of the match.

Not all of the questions relate to what is considered 'essential knowledge for scorers' but, with a little research into the MCC Laws of Cricket 2000 Code 4th Edition - 2010 you should be able to work out all of the answers.

The 2000 Code 4th Edition - 2010 can be found at <http://www.lords.org/laws-and-spirit/laws-of-cricket/>

Please send your entry (limited to one per reader) to arrive with The Third Umpire by 11th January 2013.

Please mark your entry NN

The mailing address is The Third Umpire, 60 The Lawns, Rolleston-on-Dove, Staffordshire, DE13 9DB
or email johnmbrown60@gmail.com

All entries will be examined and the names of all those whose entries are correct will be put into the Umpire's hat, from which the winner of the prize will be drawn at random.

Enjoy the challenge, and good luck to you all

The Scratchers' XI (batting first)

- 1 The last hour is scheduled to start at 6.30pm.
The players left the field for rain at 6.12pm after four balls of an over had been bowled.
Play resumes at 6.55pm: what is the minimum number of balls which remain to be bowled?
- 2 The last hour starts at 6.30pm: it rains at 6.42pm after 4.3overs have been bowled, but the rain stops as soon as the players have left the field. The players return and the next ball is bowled at 6.44pm.
What is the minimum number of balls which remain to be bowled?
- 3 ... but play stops for rain again at 6.57pm after a total of 9 overs have been bowled in the last hour.
Play starts again at 7.10pm - what is the minimum number of balls which remain to be bowled now?
- 4 A fielder leaves the field for treatment at 3.17pm and returns at 3.56pm: at how many minutes after 4 o'clock will he be allowed to bowl?
- 5 That same fielder leaves the field again at 4.12pm and returns at 4.22pm. At how many minutes after 4 o'clock will he be allowed to bowl?
- 6 The striker hits the second ball of an over, the batsmen run one and had not crossed on their second run when a fielder deliberately obstructs the non-striker who falls to the ground. How many runs should be added to the total?
- 7 ... and how many balls remain in the over?
- 8 The toss is made at 2.10pm for a match which is scheduled to start at 2.30pm: how many minutes does the captain winning the toss have before he must notify his decision whether to bat or to field first?
- 9 The striker plays a second shot at the fifth ball of an over in order to protect his wicket – the ball goes to third man and the batsmen complete one run before the ball is returned to the wicket-keeper.
How many runs should be added to the total?
- 10 ... in the same situation (ie after the striker has played a legitimate second stroke), after the batsmen have crossed on the first run, a fielder throws the ball at the stumps, but misses and the batsmen complete a further two runs.
How many runs should be added to the total?
- 11 ... and which batsman would face the next ball – Striker (5) or non-striker (10)?

Extras:

The striker hits a ball towards the boundary, the batsmen run 3, a fielder stops the ball just inside the boundary rope, goes to throw the ball, but it slips out of his hand over the rope behind him without bouncing.
How many runs should be added to the total?

For the Notchers' XI innings please turn to page 3

The Notchers' XI

- 1 The striker plays no stroke at a fair delivery and the ball runs off his pads to the gully fielder. The fielder sees the striker standing out of his ground, throws the ball at the stumps and hits them, but the striker is back in his ground. The ball ricochets and the batsmen run 2. How many runs should be added to the total?
- 2 In a 3-day match Side A have made 347 in their first innings: how many runs must Side B score in order to avoid the possibility of being asked to follow on?
- 3 What is the maximum number of minutes for which a pitch may be rolled between innings?
- 4 The striker plays no shot at a No Ball, and the ball goes off his pads to the boundary: how many runs should be added to the total?
- 5 What is the maximum number of accidental high-pitched balls which a bowler may bowl in an innings before he is suspended from bowling in that innings?
- 6 The striker hits the ball, the batsmen run and have completed two runs, but not crossed on the third when a wild throw hits the fielder's helmet lying on the ground. How many runs should be added to the total?
- 7 The bowler delivers the ball, but, in doing so, breaks the wicket at the bowler's end. The striker hits the ball to the boundary - how many runs should be added to the total?
- 8 The striker plays a defensive shot, but misses the ball which deflects off his pads: he then plays a second stroke with his bat in order to protect his wicket. A fielder overthrows the ball to the boundary - how many runs should be added to the total?
- 9 ... would these runs be recorded as Extras (5) or credited to the striker (10)?
- 10 The striker hits the ball, the batsmen run 3, but both umpires signal Short Run. After consultation the umpires agree that they had both signalled for the first run: how many runs should be added to the total?
- 11 The striker hits a No ball in the air towards the boundary, where a fielder catches the ball, but touches the boundary rope with his foot before throwing the ball back to the wicket-keeper. How many runs should be added to the total?

Extras: ... How many inches wide is the protected area?

Remember to mark your entry 'NN'

RESULT

THE LEARNING ZONE

Player identification

Mike Turner

Mike writes in response to the article by Chris Rawson which appeared on page 2 of Notchers' News Issue 18

It's so good to see this topic taken seriously. I think of player identification as a job equal in importance with keeping score. Chris's comment hits the nail on the head: "One of their e-mails back to me claimed that 'Player identification is a common problem at associate level.'

Oh really? It wouldn't be if teams were allowed to take their own scorers to international competitions." Sometimes it's not possible to have scorers who know the side, I understand that, but if a team is able to provide its own scorer surely they should be allowed to? A scorer who doesn't know their own players should do everything possible to be able to identify them as early as possible, this is a huge responsibility, and scorers who do all they can to this end earn massive respect from me.

I could write a good page on the identification tricks and drills I do; I'm sure each scorer has their own methods.

Keith's point later on about Centralisation of appointments (NN 18. pages 5-6) is linked to this. I wouldn't object to scoring matches not involving my own team, but I know I'd do a better job if I could be linked to a side I know well. In our indoor cricket league, this is extended further: each match has only one scorer, and where possible each scorer scores the same division throughout the winter, in order to become familiar with the players of the six teams in that division. I know the players appreciate that continuity. It's nothing to do with a comfort zone (e.g. my own club plays in a different division to the one I regularly score), it's about providing the best possible service to the players.

Some thoughts on Linear v Box

Jenny Booth

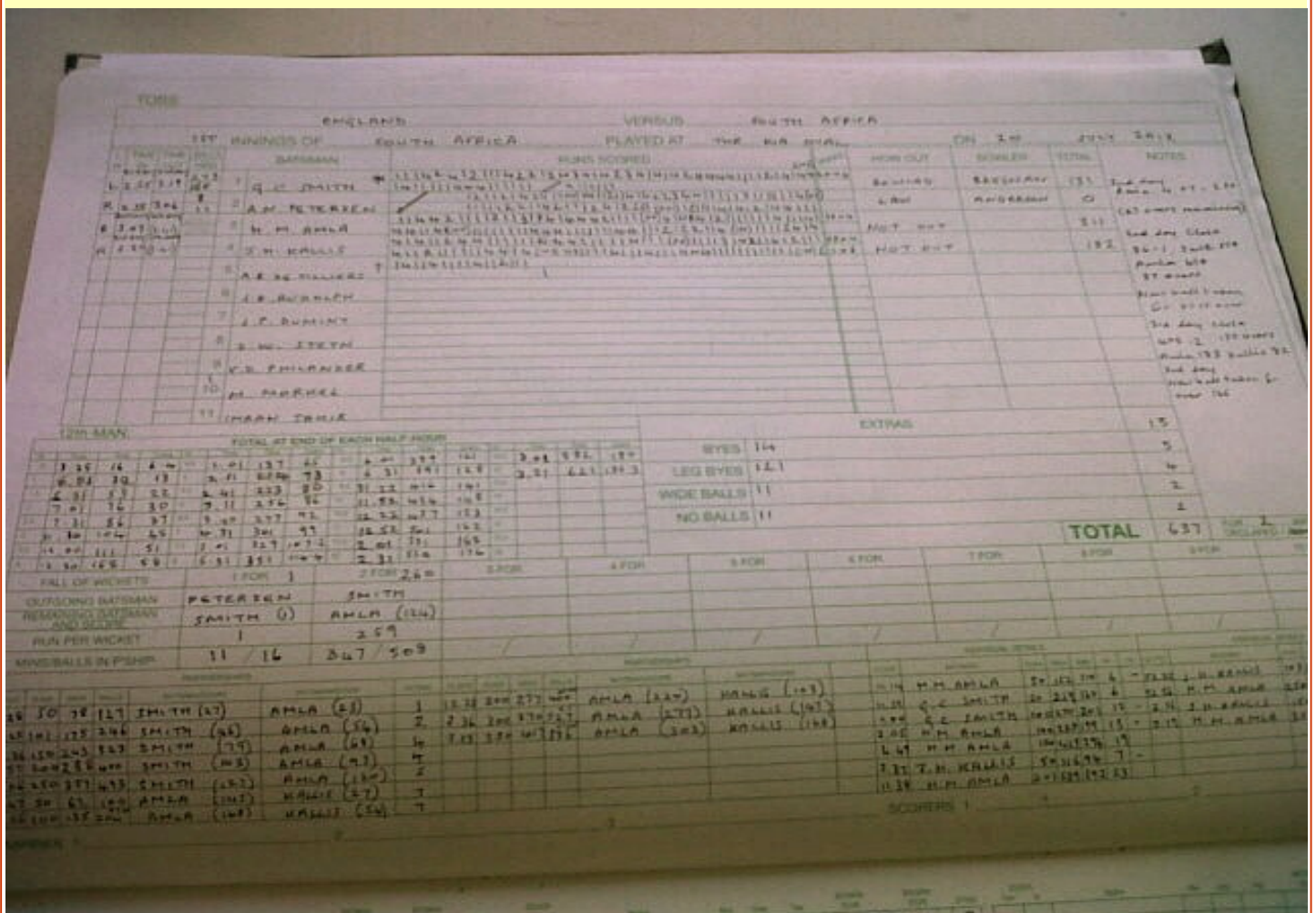
In the past two editions of Notchers' News there have been comments and views about preferences for linear or traditional box type scoring methods which have aroused my interest.

In issue 19 Mike Turner expressed his personal preference for box scoring. Each to his own, of course, but this method was designed in an age when scoring was much simpler. It was never intended to be used, for example, to record balls faced by the batsmen or to indicate when the batsmen changed ends (short run, catch in the deep, run out etc). An earlier edition had already raised the issue of recording these events with a questionnaire about when to underline the ball in the box to show this had happened. My reaction at the time was "what a palaver" when a linear system would indicate the change of ends automatically as the next ball would be shown in the column of the batsman who faced it.

I was also puzzled when Mike commented that he had had problems tracing hat-tricks from a linear scoresheet. I think there would be more problems finding hat-tricks in a box scoresheet. My husband was once credited with a hat-trick in a local newspaper when the journalist had looked in the scorebook. He had, in fact, taken wickets with the second, fourth and sixth balls of an over, - quite an achievement but not a hat-trick. The box showed three dots in the first column and three "w"s in the second with no indication of whether the scoring had been entered down the page or across the page. A linear sheet could only have recorded the balls in the order they were bowled and would have read ".w.w.w" (albeit on different lines for the different batsmen).

I do agree, though, about the difficulty of following a bowler's performance through an innings from a linear scoresheet. I deal with this (as coaches like to see bowling spells) by keeping a separate sheet on which I enter each over, in a column for each bowler, as it is completed.

Finally I enclose a (not very good!) photo of the scorebook handed to me to record the England v South Africa Test match at the Kia Oval last summer. I had heard that all senior cricket matches in South Africa were scored in identical linear scorebooks so I was surprised to be given a box book. The incredible partnership of 377 between Amla and Kallis put enormous pressure on the space available as I hope the photo shows. With a linear sheet, with its unlimited space, it would have been a doddle!



WHITHER SCORING?

Keith Booth

PART 3: Scorers - Who needs them?

So where do we go from here ? Like most other areas of early third millennium life, it's impossible to answer that one without some reference to information technology. The predecessor of PA Cricket Record was introduced in 1993 and had a mixed reception. One who embraced it whole-heartedly was Joe Hardstaff, then Secretary of Middlesex, who foresaw a time when eventually scoring, scoreboards and up-to-date scorecard printing would form one simultaneous operation. Technically there is no reason why that should not happen. TCS is capable of driving a scoreboard and other systems could presumably be modified to do likewise.

Perhaps 'eventually' has arrived. Law 4 requires two scorers, but like all laws, it can be over-ridden by Regulations and Playing Conditions. Is there a need for any more than one computer-literate, cricket-literate scorer responsible for scoring, scoreboard and scorecards? It would be highly desirable for him or her to have a sidekick who would act as an extra pair of eyes and keep a manual record, but ultimately there would be one accurate, official record.

Once upon a time scoring for a first-class county could be undertaken by anyone with a passable knowledge of the game, a tolerable standard of numeracy and a bit of spare time in the summer.

Ted Lester, the President of The Association of County Cricket Scorers (ACCS), is fond of relating the tale of his appointment as Yorkshire scorer. It arose from a conversation with the county Secretary at the end of the 1961 season, who mentioned he was looking for a 1st XI scorer for the following season. Ted said, 'I might be interested' and the following April he found himself at Lord's for the season's opener, MCC v Yorkshire, being instructed in the mystic art by the MCC scorer.

In the 1990s that all began to change and the introduction of computerised scoring in the form of first the Broadsystem, then PA Cricket Record, along with increasingly complex regulations and playing conditions and the labyrinthine contortions of Duckworth/Lewis seemed to point to a requirement for increased levels of IT skills, powers of interpretation, and a professionalism previously unknown.

It never happened and we are now back where we started. Not only is the wheel come full circle. It has fallen off. The final straw which has broken the back of an already ailing camel is the ECB's abandoning its contract of almost two decades with the Press Association for the provision of data - originated in most cases by county scorers - and replacing it by one with Opta which collects and distributes sporting statistics. It has been decided that the source data will no longer be supplied by county scorers, as has been the case since computerised scoring was introduced, but by separately employed regional analysts. The ECB switch was based on commercial considerations; scorers were not consulted, but presented with a *fait accompli*. In 2012 county scorers each suffered a reduction of around £3,000 in fees and whether the change will result in an improved service to the media and the game in general is a question still in the process of being answered.

First impressions, however, are that the Opta operation is working. At The Oval the analyst shares the scorers' room and regular checks ensure that the data transmitted to the media corresponds with the official version, which for 2012 was that maintained by the county scorers - but for how long? After one season's experience of the new arrangements, averages and statistics from the websites to which data is conveyed coincide with my own - albeit with slight variations in some batting strike rates - though there may have been difficulties on those grounds where Opta analysts are geographically separated from the scorers.

The close season has seen further developments in that a proposal has been floated that counties no longer provide away scorers and their duties be undertaken by the Opta analyst in addition to enhanced scoring duties they will be asked to perform. The recommendation has been bounced around between ECB Committees and the AGM of the ACCS. 'It has been deferred for the time being and 2013 will see no change - but it's not going to go away

So this is another kick-in-the-teeth, nail-in-the-coffin even, for county scorers (The Chairman of ACCS has expressed the views of his Association elsewhere in this issue), their job satisfaction - and pay - already reduced as a result of the PA-Opta switch, now further emaciated. The change will almost certainly take place. It is no longer a question of 'whether' but 'when'.

Only ostriches and subscribers to the Flat Earth Society can seriously believe that there is a future for the castrated role of first-class county scorer. A colleague has suggested a life expectation of five years. That may be a maximum. It could be less.

Electric and diesel locomotives no longer require firemen; mechanised horseless carriages no longer need horses and in an age when newspapers are being replaced by websites and books by Kindles and Kobos and the last typewriter has just rolled off the production line, what future can there be for the time-honoured, often aesthetically pleasing, but ultimately less efficient handwritten record?

Continued on page 6

WHITHER SCORING?

Continued from page 5

The removal of the computerised element from first-class level scoring means that the skill-levels required are lower and there should be increased opportunities for 'recreational' game scorers aspiring to professional scoring. But, like the bear that went over the mountain, what they find when they get there may be disappointing.

Keith Booth has been Surrey scorer since 1995. His book 'Knowing the Score: the Past, Present and Future of Cricket Scoring' was published by Mainstream in 1999. He is grateful that John Brown's article on his South African visit has provided the catalyst for an opportunity to update it.

Why the different scoring methods?

Jim Jenner

I am new to scoring and only started when my son joined the local Cricket club. Never having used the Linear Scoring method I cannot pass much of a comment. I score for our First Eleven in the Mellor and Braggins Cheshire Cricket League and have not come across any other scorers using the linear method.

When I went on the Scoring course we used the box scoring method which I find easy to use and the players understand what they are looking at.

My question is why is there not one standard method for scoring in the book? And one scoring method electronically? In that way all the information would be in one format and anybody could follow it. I know that I have not been doing the scoring for as long as some, but surely standardisation for all friendlies, league, knockout and other competitions would mean that all were on the same track. I am hoping to go electronic this coming season, but mostly for the Home games as we have power sockets in our score box; away will be the paper way.

ADVERTISING SCORER TRAINING COURSES

Notchers' News (<http://www.notchers.co.uk>) hosts a list of known courses which will be updated as details are received.

To advertise your course (free of charge) send course details and contact information to notchers@btopenworld.com

USEFUL EMAIL ADDRESSES

England and Wales Cricket Board Association of Cricket Officials (ECB ACO)

<http://www.ecb.co.uk/ecb/ecb-association-of-cricket-officials/>

International Institute of Cricket Umpiring and Scoring (IICUS)

<http://www.umpires.tv> (For scorer specific information email scorers@umpires.tv)



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Refill pack of 50 sheets £10 + P&P

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Scorer Correspondence courses

ECB ACO offer an Introductory level course - For more information visit the ECB ACO web site.

A 'scoring cricket limited by overs' course is independently run to the high standards previously set by The Association of Cricket Umpires and Scorers. It is open to anyone wishing to learn more about cricket scoring. For more information contact cathy.rawson@btopenworld.com

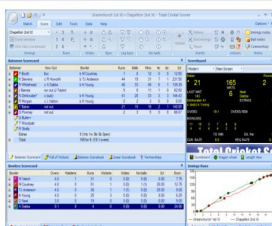
Share your cricket scoring experiences and scoring questions with readers.

Photos are welcomed and add interest to the newsletter.

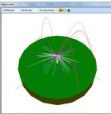
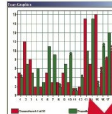
Send your contributions to: notchers@btopenworld.com

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As used at Lord's

TCS 27

Your questions, news and views are welcomed for use in future issues