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Notchers' News

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The network for cricket scorers

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

Keep Calm and Carry On

Quentin Jones

First of all let me quote you something that was said to me in Brisbane by a grade player at the end of a 2-day 2nd Grade fixture that I'd scored solo in temperatures of over 100 degrees.

"All scorers do is write a few names in a book."

The guy was being serious. The relevance of this quote will become apparent.

There is something rather strange that I seem to share with a number of scorer colleagues. In the build up to a new cricket season I start to suffer from bizarre cricket scoring nightmares.

One of the strangest occurred this spring. The nightmare went something like this. I was scoring a game at The Parks, Oxford. For some reason my colleague and I arrived a little later than planned only to find that the ground staff had planted a huge hedge close to the boundary. It was so thick and bushy that there was nowhere for us to get through to the press/scorers room in the pavilion. Suddenly we noticed that the players were taking the field and still we could not get through this damned hedge!

Of course, in real life these nightmares do not happen – or do they?

The following actually happened on 8 June 2016, seconds before the start of the Oxford MCCU v Cambridge MCCU 2- day fixture in the MCCU Championship. My colleague was Helen Hyde. We both arrived at the ground early and did all the usual things scorers do before the start of the game. Soon after the toss everything was in order; TCS was loaded and ready to go and we even had time for the kettle to go on.

Ian Blackwell and Alison Smith were the appointed umpires and Ian had the radio in case of any problems. As the opening batsman took guard both Helen's and my software crashed with the same problem. I'd never experienced this before and we could hardly believe what had happened. Quickly I went into 'Edit Match Data' and attempted to resolve the problem but it was a no go. I looked up to see Ian signalling to us to see if we were okay to go! By now Helen had let go a few expletives and was trying to reload the game while ready to score manually with a box system scorebook at the same time. Oxford MCCU dispensed with their book at the end of last season so I was laptop only. At this point I signalled back to Ian Blackwell and he called 'Play'.

Was this really happening or was it one of my stupid dreams? No, this really was happening.

After a few more expletives from Helen the press room went quiet as together we worked out how to resolve what was happening.

I opened my notebook and began to score the match using a basic linear system. Helen continued reloading the software while also keeping the manual score book. After the first two deliveries I got on the radio to Ian and informed him that both laptops had crashed and that the scoreboard would be frozen for a short while.

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Keep Calm and Carry On

continued

By the end of the sixth over and after the third attempt of loading the game, on this occasion with a new match type, Helen had caught up. At this point I made a decision based on nothing more than instinct. I closed the current version of TCS, opened up the old version 7 and reloaded the match whilst continuing to score my linear system. All the time Helen and I were constantly communicating and making sure we agreed the scores.

At the end of over seven I had the game loaded without any further problems; as over eight commenced I continued scoring manually in my linear system whilst slowly inputting the data from the previous seven overs on TCS. At the end of the eighth over both computers were up to date and contained the same information. The umpires were then informed.

There were two factors that helped us to resolve this situation. First and foremost both Helen and I have worked together numerous times and trust each other implicitly. The second factor is that we were both able to revert to manual scoring systems to continue recording the match, and the reason for this article.

One might say that reverting to a manual scoring method was the obvious solution. However, the influence of electronic scoring in cricket has a worrying side to it. Just days before this game I was talking to a scorer who had trained a pupil how to score electronically. He'd proved an excellent pupil, but sadly, did not want to be bothered with learning how to score manually. Recently I officiated with somebody who claimed to be a scorer. He recorded the game on a smart phone and was honest when he said that he would not know how to score any other way. He had absolutely no back up if the phone had crashed, if he'd taken a call or the battery had died!

Scorers who do not know how to score using pencils and a scoring record. What would they have done if they encountered the problems we did? There would have been no 'keep calm and carry on'. It would have been a complete shambles.

With cricket badly struggling financially, I worry that counties and clubs will look to do away with the role of the traditional scorer. Why have a scorer when they have an analyst or a squad member who can use a smart phone, tablet or laptop? Why bother with the expense of a scorer (if they even get paid)? Why bother with the cost of their hotel room at an away game when anyone with the relevant electronic device can step in and do the job? Why not indeed.

..... until you get a day like 8 June.

Or when the head coach asks for some detailed averages or statistics on Joe Bloggs whose possible new contract and entire future could be decided on what you provide.

Or when, as on 26 & 27 April, we had nine stoppages for hail, sleet and snow and all the over rates and possible points deductions still had to be recalculated.

Oh..... and don't forget to take into account the golden hour and if there had actually been 3 hours of play. Get this wrong and a date at Lord's may hang in the balance.

That's a lot of responsibility when all scorers do is write a few names in a book.

Should scorers have input into umpire assessment?

Ceres

I suspect that few captains seek input from scorers when writing their reports. Perhaps they should.

Scorers could offer objective assessment if asked the question 'Did the umpire'

- Signal to check that the scorers were ready at the start of play, after a drinks interval etc.?
- Give clear and, where more than one signal is required, separate signals?
- Signal from a position that allowed the scorers to see the signal clearly?
- Watch for an acknowledgement of each signal? If it wasn't acknowledged I didn't see it. An increasing number of First Class umpires give a nod of the head to acknowledge having seen the signal from the scorers - good practice.
- Give a second signal for a Wide or No ball immediately the ball is dead? The first signal (if there is one) isn't always easy to see, especially if the umpire is standing at 90° to the scorers and the hand furthest from the scorer is used to make that signal. Scorers may not hear the call of a Wide or No ball delivery due to wind or other noise, distance or the glass window in front of the scorers. Recording a dot ball then seeing the signal is so frustrating.
- Signal to his colleague after the 4th or 5th valid delivery? Good practice but not if it looks like a No ball signal
- Agree the scores (runs, wickets and overs) with the scorers at the end of each innings/session of play?
- Communicate well with the scorers? Was that dismissal caught or stumped? That quick single taken by No 11 when the throw hit the stumps, rebounded into the batsmen's face causing injury - did the batsman retire, not out and one run scored or was he dismissed, no runs scored and the side all out?

Eight points; do you have more? How many umpires would you assess as 8/8? Could scorer marking make a difference?

Scoring for Gloucestershire 2nd XI

Michael Turner

“I don’t like scoring on computer. I don’t like linear scoring.”

When Sue Drinkwater asked me if I was available to score some matches for Gloucestershire 2nd XI this season, my unspoken reply was “You bet! Whatever it takes, I’ll make myself available.” Top of the “whatever it takes” list was that I would have to face my concerns about the reliability of computer scoring and find a way to make it work for me. Sue’s tip is to keep a written back up. Here’s another problem: for 34 years I’ve only ever scored box-type, never took to linear scoring; but I had to accept that if I tried to score in my traditional scorebook alongside the computer I would risk taking on too much and making mistakes: it had to be linear.

So after buying a copy of Total Cricket Scorer, and refreshing my knowledge of linear scoring technique, I had time for one friendly for my club trying to do both at once. I was determined to create wagon wheels to show the players they’d get something to compensate for not having a written scorecard; they went down very well! I was very glad I had the safety net of the written backup when the opposition unexpectedly brought a 12th player on to bowl and I had to edit the match type as the game was going ahead to accommodate this.

My first game for Glos 2nds was a 4-day friendly at the County Ground at Bristol against Durham 2nds. It turned out that the Durham scorer, Peter Connelly, was also making his County 2nd XI debut: this meant we had no senior colleague to rely on; it was down to us to work as a team to get it right! We did however have the experienced Bob Smith who was running the scoreboard and he judged it perfectly, providing just the right amount of assistance whilst we found our feet.

Player identification was a concern for me, but thankfully all but two of the players had numbered shirts, and of the two without, one was both wicket-keeper and left handed batsman, so I could easily tell them apart when I needed to. Identifying the slips was a priority: work out who was where when they had their backs (and numbers) to us, so that if one took a catch at the far end I was a step ahead.

A novelty for me was having walkie-talkies to communicate with the umpires, although I had to be reminded to use them, once when the method of dismissal was unclear, and later when the umpire was slow to signal. The umpires used the walkie-talkies at the end of each session to confirm the “minutes to count” for the purpose of calculating over rates, and as the match went on I realised it was wise to have worked this out for myself first, in case our figures were wildly different. Similarly for the calculation of overs remaining when an innings ended. I’d not had to concern myself with such matters before, but Bob gave me some valuable tips to aid with the over-rate computation.

Spending four days scoring the same match felt decidedly weird: no familiar “1 day: 2 innings” rhythm. But that apart it’s just a cricket match like any other I score, and after about 30 minutes each day I felt “at home”. TCS and linear scoring complemented each other perfectly. I found the ECB recreational linear sheet sufficient for my needs; I didn’t bother with writing a summary sheet, but could have done if the computer had died on me. I could trust the software to add up the totals correctly – it’s what computers are good at! – instead I used the linear scoresheet to check I had the right number of balls in the over and the right batsman on strike. I found I didn’t miss the comfort blanket box-type scoring gives me by allowing me to cross-check everything, since I could just cross-check TCS against linear any time I wanted. And if I still couldn’t work out why they didn’t match, my colleague was there to willingly offer assistance. And if I was called on to help him, it was great to have the linear sheet to refer to, so I didn’t have to dot around TCS at the same time as trying to keep score there.

A big loss for Glos 2nds meant that no-one was very interested in seeing my finished scorecard; at club or county cricket, some things remain the same!

Two 3-day championship games followed before I had to pass the laptop onto other fortunate souls: a rain-ruined game at Bristol CC with Essex; then a match at Polo Farm Sports Club at Canterbury, where I had the pleasure of Andy Bateup’s company and learned a great deal. The scoring position here posed new problems: side-on to the pitch at ground level, I discovered how hard it was to switch my view of a ball nicked at speed from the striker to the cluster of bodies behind the wicket – perhaps keeper, 3 slips and a gully – to identify which one held the catch in the split second before they all huddle together to celebrate. **Does anyone have any tips?**

By the end of the Kent match I felt like I could legitimately call myself a County 2nd XI scorer – that feels good!

I have added a few items to my list of scoring “must haves” at this level: laptop with TCS, reams of linear scoresheets, printer, lamp to signal to the umpires, gang socket to plug everything in, 4G dongle (to send TCS live updates – I loved seeing my wagon wheels find their way to the internet – and to access the competition regulations), and of course walkie-talkies!

Back to that opening quote – it needs some amendment:

“Scoring linear AND computer together? That I like!”

Using Frindall Score Sheets

Chris Thomas

Regarding Nathan Bradley's question on the Frindall score sheets (NN34): I hope the following is useful. I have to say up front that I am not a scorer, nor attached to a club – I'm just a keen follower of the game who is familiar with scoring.

There are actually two different approaches to Frindall's system: the extremely detailed notes he took for the BBC tests and the more basic linear scoring method.

The scoring packs he provided contained a 4-page pamphlet that described the basic method, with simpler sheets that use the standard scoring symbols. It is this method that was recommended for regular club scoring. I obtained these scoring packs via Bill's wife Debbie not long after he died, along with reproductions of some of his scoresheets. However, I see that the Frindall website is no longer active, so I'm not sure if these are still available.

The more detailed system is differentiated largely by the addition of descriptive notes of each ball. Alongside the usual scoring symbols are additional signs to denote the direction the balls were hit, plus any other features of the deliveries, such as if the ball was a bouncer, or came off the edge of the bat. This was designed to allow Bill to answer the various exotic questions the commentators would ask him!

A good introduction to this more involved method can be found in his autobiography "Bearders: My Life In Cricket". Chapter 5 contains a history of the method and thorough description (in relatively lay terms) and walk-through of a session of the 2005 Edgbaston Ashes test. Additionally, he also published a "Frindall's Score Book" series in the late 1970's, which contained a full description of his methods, as well as colour copies of the complete scoresheets for a number of Test series. (I obtained the Eng v Aus 1977 edition via a cricket bookshop and it's amazingly detailed!) Both books are great sources of information.

I found the basic linear method very easy to work out, just by omitting the extra descriptive parts from the autobiography. (I found it much more straightforward than when I later came to the Box method.) Admittedly, I have only dabbled with scoring, but my overall impression is that the basic Frindall linear method is ample enough, and the more detailed version would be overkill for most uses.

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.

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

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

<http://www.notchers.co.uk> hosts links to other websites offering information for scorers



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A scorer correspondence course which aims to achieve the same high standards previously set by The Association of Cricket Umpires and Scorers is open to those wanting 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.

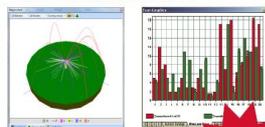
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TCS 27

AS used at Lord's

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