

Youlden Parkville Cricket Club

Injury Prevention Policy 2020-21

Background

Cricket is one of Australia's safest sports. However injuries can still occur. About one third of cricket injuries occur at school, and 20% at club training. Cricket Australia research has found cricket injuries are mostly fractures (26.8%), strains to muscles and tendons (23.1%) and sprains (19.6%). About 35% of injuries occur while fielding, 22% while batting and bowling 14%. A direct blow from the ball injuring muscles, tendons and ligaments while batting, bowling and fielding is a common injury.¹

Repetitive stress on the muscles and skeleton of the body, without adequate and appropriate preparation and rest can result in chronic or overuse injuries in athletes of any age. However in children and adolescents, this fact is complicated by the growth process, which can result in a unique set of injuries among athletes aged 13 – 18 years. Growth-related injuries most frequently affect the cartilage at the end of long bones in the legs and arms, and the tendons joining muscles together.²

Safety Tips for Cricket³

- Warm up and stretch before and regularly during a cricket session. Bowlers, particularly fast bowlers, should warm up before their bowling session
- Good technique and practices will help prevent injury
- Encourage children to play modified cricket programs as a means of developing good technique
- Restrict the number of overs bowled in any one session. The actual number should take into account the bowler's physical maturity. This is particularly important for young cricketers. Refer to the *Youth Pace Bowling Guidelines* below.
- Wear appropriate safety equipment
 - Wear body padding when batting, including gloves and leg pads for all players and protectors
 - When batting, wicket-keeping or fielding in close, wear a cricket helmet
 - Wear protective gear during training as well as competition
 - Wicket-keepers to wear a mouth guard (especially in junior cricket), in addition to helmet use
- Club positions:
 - Appoint a Risk Management Officer to consider and implement these safety tips as a minimum. Good preparation is important
 - Coaches should undergo regular re-accreditation and education updates to ensure they have the latest information about playing techniques
 - Appoint a Club/school safety officer and develop a procedural response checklist in readiness for an injury that may occur during training or competition. This should include checking that the first-aid kit for the Club/school is adequately stocked in case an injury occurring
 - Where possible, ensure a qualified first-aid officer or sports trainer is on hand to treat injured players
- Ensure all injured cricketers receive adequate treatment and full rehabilitation before they resume participation
- Cricket Australia also recommends Clubs have an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) available.

¹ *Well Played: Australian Cricket's Playing Policies and Community Guidelines* (Cricket Australia) p.52
<https://www.community.cricket.com.au/coach/becoming-a-coach/well-played>

² *Journal of Athletic Training* (March-April 2011) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3070508/>

³ *Well Played: Australian Cricket's Playing Policies and Community Guidelines* (Cricket Australia) p.54
<https://www.community.cricket.com.au/coach/becoming-a-coach/well-played>

Injuries in fast bowlers⁴

- Overuse injuries are common and most often associated with young fast bowlers. An estimated 50% of overuse injuries in physically active children and adolescents may be preventable.
- Lumbar (low back) stress fracture is the most debilitating fast bowler injury and results in the most time missed due to any injury in young fast bowlers.
- Adolescence provides a “window of opportunity” to improve bone strength with consistent bowling through this period when bone is thought to be responsive to well-planned loading. This has potential to develop a stronger thicker lumbar vertebrae that are better capable of withstanding the loads of fast bowling.
- Cricket Australia research shows that the frequency of bowling sessions (more sessions per week and less time between sessions) increases the risk of developing a lumbar stress fracture. This is a more prominent risk factor than the number of balls bowled.
- Sustained bowling over a prolonged period of time (e.g 3 months) without a rest period is also a risk factor in the development of lumbar stress fracture.

Youth Pace Bowling Guidelines⁵

It is the responsibility of all coaches, team managers and captains to ensure the following guidelines are followed for young fast bowlers:

GUIDELINES

- Avoid bowling more than 2 days in a row where possible
- Avoid bowling more than 4 days in a week
- Allow one easy week (eg: 50% of target load) every 4-5 weeks
- Schedule a week off bowling after every 10-12 weeks of bowling to allow your body to recover

AGE	BOWLING RECOMMENDATIONS
Under-11	Two overs maximum each spell* & Four overs maximum per match day
Under 13	Four overs maximum each spell* & Eight overs maximum per match day Target 100-120 balls per week (match & training)
Under 15	Allow 4-6 weeks gradual bowling preparation prior to the season Five overs maximum each spell* & twelve overs maximum per match day Target 100-120 balls per week (match & training)
Under 17	Allow 6-8 weeks gradual bowling preparation prior to the season Six overs maximum each spell* & 16 overs maximum per match day Target 120-150 balls per week (match & training)
Under 19	Allow 8-10 weeks gradual bowling preparation prior to the season Seven overs maximum each spell* & 20 overs maximum per match day Target 150-180 balls per week (match & training)

NWMCA Match rules: Under age grades - rule 2.5 One day matches	
Under 16	each bowler is limited to 6 overs
Under 14	each bowler is limited to 5 overs
Under 12	each bowler is limited to 4 overs

⁴ *Youth Pace Bowling Guidelines* <https://www.community.cricket.com.au/clubs/protecting-your-club/managing-risk/youth-pace-bowling-guidelines>

⁵ The following guidelines are recommended by Cricket Victoria and can be found on the *MyCricket Community* website (<https://www.community.cricket.com.au/clubs/protecting-your-club/managing-risk/youth-pace-bowling-guidelines>)