



Start Times for League Cricket

Following what appeared to be the preferences of a majority of players and captains who had been consulted or responded to surveys, a proposal to bring forward start times by 1 hour for 1st XIs (for timed games only as 50/50 games already started at the earlier time) and 2nd XIs (all games) was brought forward and approved at the 2017 AGM. (In a separate vote Premier and Division 1 1st XI start times moved forward 30 minutes but we are not aware of any wish to reverse that change)

There has been feedback during the season from various clubs that the new start time (12.00 other than on the last two Saturdays) is not favoured. This is by no means the only feedback received as a number of clubs and individual players have commented that they are happy with the changes. However, there has been sufficient adverse comment for the Executive Committee to conclude that further discussion should be enabled. The feedback of most concern to the Committee has been the suggestion that the changes impacted availability, especially of young players.

It has been decided therefore that the case for reverting partly or wholly to the previous timings should be tested at the Council meeting on the basis that clubs' views could have changed in the light of experience. If there is an overall preference for going back to previous match timings we shall consider putting appropriate motions to the January AGM.

We will seek separate views on start times for 1st XI matches (other than Premier and Division 1) and 2nd XI matches. The intention is to have a discussion just about reversing last year's changes and not about making other start time alterations unless any fresh groundswell of opinion emerges.

As clubs will be aware the main reason for adopting earlier start times was to meet the perceived preference of a majority of players for earlier finishes. Some views expressed in discussions last year were to the effect that late finishes could be addressed through improved over rates, and this led to an initiative in the 2017 season to start to address over rate issues. A separate report will be made to Council on that and it is sufficient here to record that the level of support for the data collection exercise shown by clubs does not suggest that dealing with slow over rates is of much interest to the majority of clubs.

Regarding the other main way of enabling earlier finishes – a shorter game – the Committee does not consider that this is an issue that will go away but has no immediate plans to revive that debate given the clear majority preference expressed last year for retaining existing match formats.

The Committee therefore advises that discussions and decisions about start times should take place on the basis that so to the extent that earlier finishes are desired, earlier starts are the only game in town.