

# UltraFoam Cricket Activity Guide

## Introduction

The following game was developed as a modified, foam ball version of cricket that can be easily learned at the elementary and junior high levels.

The game, which is ideal for developing striking and throwing skills, can be played by as few as 12, and as many as 30 students, and requires no special facilities.

## Game Set-up

The game can be played on just about any open, level area, indoors or out; in a gym, playground, softball or football field. If playing outdoors, the playing area should be completely bounded with cones, flags or other type of markers. Though any size or shape field or court will do, a circular field with a 50-yard diameter would be optimal. Wickets are placed equidistant from all sides.

Place the wickets (the 2 sets of 3 poles set in a base) in the center of the playing area, facing each other; 14-15 yards apart for 8-10 year olds, 16-17 yards apart for 11-13 year olds. Mark an 8' line, 4' in front of, and parallel to, each wicket with either chalk or, if playing indoors, masking tape. This is the safe line.



## Batting

Cricket, like baseball or softball, is a bat-and-ball sport. Teams alternate batting and fielding, trying to score runs while batting and trying to get batters out while fielding.

The cricket batter stands in front of one wicket and tries to hit pitches thrown to him by the pitcher (called a bowler in cricket) who stands at the other wicket. Another fielder, called the wicket-keeper, acts as a "catcher" and stands behind the batter's wicket.

### Rules for the Batter

- Batter must always bat with a partner, who stands at the other wicket. Only one batter actually hits the ball at any given time, but both must work together to score runs.
- There's no "foul territory" in cricket. The batters can hit the ball anywhere; forward, sideways, even backwards and it's fair!
- There are no balls or strikes. No matter how often the batter misses the ball, they will never strike out.
- The batter doesn't have to run after hitting the ball if he doesn't want to.
- Both batters must carry their bats with them when they do run.

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## Scoring Runs

If the batter hits the ball and decides to run, he and his partner, carrying their bats with them, run to their opposite wickets. They score a run as soon as they're both over their respective safe lines.

- Batters can keep running back and forth like this, from wicket to wicket, as often as they think they can do so safely and will score a run each and every time they switch wickets.
- 6 automatic runs are scored each time they hit a fly ball out of the playing area.
- 4 automatic runs are scored each time they hit a ground ball out of the playing area.
- The batters can run if the ball gets past the wicket-keeper, just like a "passed ball" in baseball.
- Officially, the batters can continue to bat until out, but in PE games each batter's time at bat should be limited to no more than 5 or 6 pitches.

## Getting Batters Out

The fielding team can get the batters out by one of 4 ways:

- If the bowler can get a pitch past the batter and hit the batter's wicket (out bowled, similar to a "strikeout").
- If the batter hits his own wicket while batting, even accidentally (out hit wicket).
- If a fielder catches a ball on the fly (out caught).
- If a fielder can hit the wicket with the ball before the batter, when going for a run, can get over the safe line (out run out, like being caught "off base").

## Rules for Bowling

- Bowler must stay behind the safe line at his wicket until he releases the ball.
- He can throw the ball on the bounce as well as on the fly.
- He must bowl underarm.
- There's no penalty if he hits the batter with the ball.
- The bowler must throw the ball within reach of the batter. Failure to do so (called wide) results in one penalty run for the batting team, and the pitch must be taken over.
- To give both batters a chance to hit, the direction of the bowling must be reversed every 6 pitches. That is, after one fielder has bowled 6 times towards one wicket, another fielder take the ball, goes to the opposite wicket and bowls 6 times the other way. This change of bowling direction (called an over) continues every 6 pitches throughout the game.

## Winning the Game

A cricket match lasts one inning. This is because everyone on the batting team must come up, and be put out one after another. The very last batter doesn't have to be put out because no one can bat alone. The fielding team then comes up and bats through their entire order. Whichever team has the most runs is the winner!

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## Tips for Playing

- When batting, swing at everything, even pitches thrown at or behind you. Remember, there's no foul territory.
- Don't stand too close to the wicket when batting.
- When bowling, aim at the wicket. That's all you're trying to hit.
- Try to bowl the ball to the batter on one low, fast bounce.
- When fielding, cover all areas of the field even the area behind the batter.
- Don't field too close to the batters.
- Be prepared to back up throws at the wicket.

## Tips for Teaching Game

- Divide the class into 4 permanent teams and play a round-robin tournament (this would require 2 sets of equipment)
- Assign the names of cricket playing countries to each team (i.e., England, Australia, etc.).
- Have teams bat boy/girl.
- Have everyone on the fielding team bowl one over in rotation.
- Time permitting, play a 2 innings match (i.e., have each team bat and field twice).

Playing Area = 50-60 Yards in Diameter

