

## A REVIEW: THE CHRONOLOGY OF CHANGES IN THE LAW 6 OF CRICKET

Syed Tariq Murtaza, PhD\*

Shamshad Ali\*\*

Ashish Kumar Katiyar\*\*\*

### **Abstract**

*Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) established the set of rules which describes the laws of cricket worldwide to ensure uniformity and fairness in the game. There are currently 42 laws in which one of them is the Law 6 related with the bat which is the base of this present study. There has been a major transformation in cricket bats throughout the history. Since the initially systematized guidelines were composed in 1744, the sequence of changes influencing the bat comes in 1774 (first rule for the bat), 1809, 1979, and 2008 respectively. The changes might have made some sense to protect the spirit and balance of the game. They subsequently ruled the bats illegal under Law 6.2 (2000 code - 2nd edition 2003) relating to covering material. The MCC as the Guardian of the Laws of Cricket has a duty to maintain the traditional balance between the bat and the ball. In recent years, it has been evident that the bat is starting to dominate. Furthermore, with the developments in technology and materials, a few cricket bats have appeared in the market with potential performance-enhancing properties. MCC believes that, if the cricket bat becomes too powerful, it will be detrimental to the sport that forces to MCC to change Law 6(the bat) and a 3rd edition of the 2000 code was published in 2008 with newly created appendix E for the bat.*

\* Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Education, A.M.U., Aligarh (U.P.) India.

\*\* Shamshad Ali, Assistant Professor, Mechanical Engg. Section, University Polytechnic, A.M.U., Aligarh (U.P.) , India.

\*\*\* Research Scholar, Department of Physical Education, A.M.U., Aligarh (U.P.) India.

## Introduction

The origin of cricket can be followed a magnificent past and a complex history (Bob Woolmer 2008). It relishes 400-Odd years of annals (Murtaza S. T. & et. al. 2014). Authors believe that it has been originated from the ancient sport of India i.e. Gilli Danda (Tipcat in English) which has possibly the origin over 2500 years ago (Steve Craig-2002 & John Arlott-1975). Cricket is extremely prevalent in Australia, New Zealand, India, West Indies, South Africa and Pakistan.

The primary cricket bats took after the cutting edge hockey stick and it is likely that the first bat was an unfashioned branch from a tree. The main bats were substantial at the base with a thin shaft. Cricket rules placed no single limitations on what size and shape the bat should have been.

As we travel into the history the earliest cricket bats from the 17<sup>th</sup> century were made out of a single piece of wood upto 18<sup>th</sup> century. At this time there were no rules governing the width of a cricket bat. On 23 September, 1741, Shock White of Ryegate used a bat fully as wide as a wicket against the Hambledon Club. (Evolution of Cricket Bat). This prompted the Hambledon Club to record a minute to the effect that the maximum breadth of a cricket bat is to be set at four and a quarter inches (4.25 in) which universally accepted and this restriction made the 1<sup>st</sup> Law of cricket bat known as the Law 6 of the Laws of Cricket (Morgan, D. 2002).

Other clubs quickly adopted this standard, using metal gauges to check the size of bats before allowing their use (Morgan, D. 2002). The first recorded codification of the rules of cricket is the "Code of 1744". The evident popularity of the game necessitated some consistent rules and a Code of Laws laid down by the Maryleborn Cricket Club (MCC) in 1788 and adopted throughout the game. Prior to this code, the rules varied depending upon in which part of British Isles the game was being played in 1744 the London Cricket Club produced that are recognizably the rules of modern cricket. The MCC, one of the oldest (1788) cricket organization and is still the custodian of the laws relating to cricket at the global plane.

This edition of the Laws was agreed by the MCC sometime after 1803. This particular version was published on May 25 1809 by John Wallis, Warwick Squ. Newgate Street (Cricinfo 2009).

In 1820's world of English cricket, the introduction of faster 'round arm' bowling had led to the ball bouncing higher, and the bat becoming lighter with a higher 'swell' to compensate. Before

1830, the bats were all one piece. Bats were very easily shattered in to two so a separate handle was added to the bat in 1830. (Darling, G. 2009). This cut down on the bats being broken all the time. An additional restriction was added in 1835 to limit the bat to 38 inches in length which is still the same as today it is.

By the 1830's faster bowling against lighter bats was causing regular handle breakages. So by seeing this entire thing happening, basic carpentry skills were brought to bear, and a splice was introduced into the bat; its sole purpose being to make bat repair simple by moving the broken handle and adding a new one. The early handles used either willow or ash (Curtis, D. 2012). This led to change in batting techniques and batsmen started playing both vertical and horizontal shots instead of going only for horizontal wild swings.

In the last of December 1979 a new type of bat called 'The Combat' was used by Dennis Lillee. Which was made of aluminum during the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the test match in Perth. Australia's most memorable and infamous patent is the one taken out by Graham Monaghan and Dennis Lillee for an aluminium bat in 1979 (Curtis, D. 2010 & Sengupta, A. 2012.) which forced a rule change by the MCC. It was only meant as a low cost bat to make cricket accessible in poorer countries but Lillee couldn't resist the publicity stunt of using it in an Ashes test match.

Dennis Lillee could never have predicted the impact of his action on the subsequent constraints placed on cricket bat design. In fact, there have been two major amendments to Law 6 (The Bat) in the last 30 years – one in 1980 and another in 2008 – where previously there had been no change since 1809. Both changes were related to bat advancements that were patented, and that have coincided with the rapid advancement in material technologies over this period. If technological advancement continues unabated then, despite the restrictions of the current laws, it is inevitable that another invention in the next 20 years will cause a further rule change.

Many inventions have been done by inventors from different parts of the globe to improve the performance of the cricket bat. At present there are a number of commercially available cricket bats with the different types of blade and handle designs. The rules of cricket up to 1980 had no restriction on materials for blade or handle, and this led to many variations on the composite and lamination theme. There were many innovations based on technology were appeared and the first innovation was the colorful (or glaring) glass fiber sheet covering the back of the Kookaburra

bats launched in December 2004. MCC subsequently ruled the bats illegal under Law 6.2 (2000 code - 2nd edition 2003) relating to covering material, which stated that it 'shall not be likely to cause unacceptable damage to the ball'. So it seems more of a supposition by the MCC that the material (on the back of the blade) will cause an increase in performance of the bat, which will then damage the ball. And also in 2005 Kookaburra released a new type of bat. It had a carbon fiber-reinforced polymer support down the spine of the bat to provide more support to the spine and blade of the bat, thus prolonging the life of the bat (Curtis, D. 2009). The first player to use this new bat in international cricket was Australian cricketer Ricky Ponting. However this innovation in cricketing technology was controversially banned by the International Cricket Council (ICC) as they were advised by the MCC that it unfairly gave more power in the shot and was unfair in competition, as not all players had access to this new technology. The second is in the 2006 came along the carbon fiber composite handle with Newbery (the original patent holder) (Curtis, D. 2009). Gray Nicolls followed in 2007 with the Fusion (Curtis, D. 2009). The MCC were clearly nervous of the direction some of the manufacturers were taking. The principle concern was that new materials were increasing bat performance and giving the batsmen too much advantage. Action was required to maintain the traditions and spirit of the game. Taking advice from engineering researchers at Imperial College, the MCC offered two options. The first was to impose a bat performance measure, and a test that all bats must undertake, which would be similar to that used for baseball bats in the USA (Curtis, D. 2009). The second was to limit performance through material constraints. The former would initially be onerous and complex to govern, the latter very simple to initiate and govern. So, simpler one won the day and Law 6 was changed and a 3rd edition of the 2000 code was published in 2008. The changes might have made some sense to protect the spirit and balance of the game.

Then in 2008 the Mongoose bat propped up, specifically designed for T-20 Cricket, having the blade 33% shorter than a conventional bat and the handle is 43% longer than the blade. That Mongoose bat was declared legal by the MCC though the rule of MCC says consequently that (*only 10% of 'non-wood' material in the handle and the blade must be altogether of wood*). The MCC membership approved the introduction of a new version of Law 6 in May 2008, together with a newly created Appendix E. The Law, which lays down details about the bat, was written following extended discussions with many bat manufacturers, willow growers and the ICC. The

new Law comes into effect on 1st October 2008. The new Law 6 is far more prescriptive than the previous version. Its purpose is to maintain the traditional construction and performance of cricket bats and to restrict the introduction of potentially performance enhancing materials. For the first time in Law, the handle is defined, the volume of the handle's constituent parts has been controlled and the thickness of protective coverings has been limited. With the important new aspect that bats have to be graded as either A, B or C with the following characteristics:

Bat characteristic	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C
10% or less material other than cane, wood and twine in the handle	✓	✓	✓
More than 10% but not more than 20% materials other than cane, wood and twine in the handle	X	X	✓
More than 20% material other than cane, wood and twine in the handle	X	X	X
Anti-Scuff fitted (must not cause unacceptable ball damage)	✓	✓	✓
Blade covered with cloth	X	X	✓
Use of non-solid materials (e.g. varnish) to improve resistance to moisture and mask natural blemishes.	✓	✓	✓
Toe insert	X	✓	✓
External toe guard	✓	✓	✓
Side inserts	X	✓	✓

No limits have been set on the weight of a bat, the maximum depth from the face to the back of the blade, and the width of the side edges.

By reviewing the Law 6, if the MCC is going to be consistent than either the Mongoose bat should be banned, or high-tech handles should be allowed to return. The way things are on the hand, the latest change to Law 6 is subject to keep any improvement of interest for cricket bats is quite a while to come. What is there left to do for the advancement of cricket bat as compared to all other sports equipments tested around. There appears to be an inconsistency in the application of the laws by the MCC. As it stands though, the latest changes to Law 6 is likely to prevent any

innovation of interest in cricket bats for the foreseeable future Ali, S. & Murtaza, S. T., (2014) accepted the challenges of MCC and invented a cricket bat with detachable handle of varying lengths and filed a Patent in India in the light of newly created Law 6. So let's see what reaction comes from the side of MCC when it comes in the market and frequently used by the players.

### Conclusion

The retrospective study was based on the progression to Law 6 (the bat). The first codified rules were written in 1744 and the sequence of changes influencing the bat was made firstly in 1774 (the first rule for the bat) i.e. confining the width of the bat to a most extreme of 4.25 inches, after that the width of cricket bat standardized for the first time and published in 1809, and then after the length of bat limit is to 38 inches this is an additional restriction was added in 1835. In 1979, it was stated that the blade of a bat must be made altogether of wood. The 3rd edition of the 2000 code was published in 2008, together with a newly created Appendix E. The changes might have made some sense to protect the spirit and balance of the game MCC denied all the possibilities of real innovation in cricket bats, not just in design but in all manners, it creates drawback for testing and improvement in the essential tool for batsmen and left a slight dark note around the game. As likely compared with different sports, cricket has lost all the opportunities and get to be behind this times in the advancement and testing of new equipments for the batsman after the MCC's newly created Law 6 (the bat).

### References:

1. Ali, S. & Murtaza, S. T. (Patent no.993/del/2013-14- Cricket Bat with Detachable Handle of Varying Length) Retrieved on July 8, 2015 from <https://ipindiaonline.gov.in/patentsearch/search/index.aspx> at (9:00 am IST )
2. Andrew, C. & Bernard,F.(1998). (Patent No. GB2202153 (A) - Handle for sporting instruments) Retrieved on July 8, 2015 from <http://worldwide.espacenet.com/publicationDetails/biblio?CC=GB&NR=2202153A&KC=A&FT=D> (2:00 pm IST)
3. Bob Woolmer (2008). Bob Woolmer's Art & Science of Cricket, published by Struik Publishers (a division of New Holland Publishing (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd)
4. Cricinfo (2009). Retrieved on July 8, 2015 from



5. Curtis, D. (2009). The Cricket Bat Journal Patents: The archive....high-tech handles. Retrieved on July 8, 2015 from <http://engineeringport.co.uk/2009/10/27/cricket-bat-innovation-smothered-by-law-6/> at (12:30 am IST )
6. Curtis, D. (2009). Tinkering with Law 6. Retrieved on July 8, 2015, from <http://allaboutcricketbats.blogspot.in/2009/10/tinkeringwithlaw6.html#more> at (1:00 pm IST )
7. Curtis, D. (2010). Charting Inventiveness in Cricket Bats. Retrieved on July 8, 2015, from <http://engineeringport.co.uk/2010/12/06/charting-inventiveness-in-cricket-bats/> at (11:00 am IST )
8. Curtis, D. (2012). The Cricket Bat Journal. Retrieved on July 8, 2015, from <http://allaboutcricketbats.blogspot.in/2012/09/to-splice-or-not-to-splice.html> at (9:00 am IST )
9. Darling, G. (2009). The History of the Cricket Ball. Retrieved on July 8, 2015 at (4:10 pm IST )
10. Darling, G. (2009). The History of the Cricket Ball. Retrieved on July 8, 2015, from [http://www.ehow.com/about\\_5085388\\_history-cricket-bats.htm](http://www.ehow.com/about_5085388_history-cricket-bats.htm) at (4:30 pm IST )
11. Edward,P.(2013). The Blade Maketh The Man. Retrieved on July 24, 2015, from <http://www.espnricinfo.com/magazine/content/story/605244.html> (1:00 pm IST)
12. Evolution of Cricket Bat-crickettamasha. Retrieved on July 8, 2015.<https://sites.google.com/site/crickettamasha/evolu> at (5:00 pm IST )
13. History of cricket bats. Retrieved on July 8, 2015 from <http://cricketmost.weebly.com/history-of-cricket-bats.html> at (5:30 pm IST)
14. [http://static.espnricinfo.com/db/ABOUT\\_CRICKET/LAWS/LAWS\\_1809\\_CODE.html](http://static.espnricinfo.com/db/ABOUT_CRICKET/LAWS/LAWS_1809_CODE.html) on 08/08/2015 at (9:30 am IST )
15. John Arlott (1975). The Oxford Companion to World Sports and Games, Oxford University Press, ISBN 978-0192115386 at (5:50 pm IST )
16. Khan,M.(2013). Patent no. US20130337947 A1- Cricket Bat. Retrieved on July 24, 2015 from <http://www.google.com/patents/US20130337947> (5:00 pm IST)
17. M.C.C. (2008). Law 6 – The Bat. Retrieved on July 8, 2015 from <http://www.lords.org/mcc/laws-of-cricket/laws/appendix-e-the-bat/>, Lords.org - Marylebone

- Cricket Club (2008-10-01). "Law 6: Bats". Lords.org., Lords.org - Marylebone Cricket Club. "Laws of Cricket Appendix E - The bat". Lords.org. at (6:00 pm IST )
18. Morgan, D. (2002). History of Cricket. Retrieved on July 8, 2015 <http://www.dangermouse.net/cricket/history/origins.html> at (7:00 pm IST )
19. Murtaza S. T. & et al. Innovative Method To Practice & Improve The Game Of Cricket. Published in Indian Streams Research Journal, Vol.4 Issue-12 Jan-2015 ISSN 2230-7850 at (8:30 pm IST )
20. Richardson, D.J & Richardson,D.M.(Patent No. 20130316860- GRIP FOR A CRICKET BAT HANDLE)Retrieved on July 24, 2015 from <http://www.faqs.org/patents/app/20130316860> (9:00 pm IST)
21. Richardson,D.J & Richardson,D.M.(Patent No. WO2012081996 A1 - Grip for A Cricket Bat Handle) Retrieved from <http://www.google.com/patents/WO2012081996A1?cl=en>
22. Sengupta, A. (2012). The Ashes 1979: Dennis Lillee walks out to bat with an aluminium bat! Retrieved on July 8, 2015, from <http://www.cricketcountry.com/articles/the-ashes-1979-dennis-lillee-walks-out-to-bat-with-an-aluminium-bat-20910> at (9:00 pm IST )

