



Optimum vision and eye protection in cricket

A guide for coaches, parents, children and young people



Nowadays, it is not uncommon for children to wear prescription or non-prescription spectacles whilst playing cricket. The following information aims to offer advice on the appropriate frames and lenses for this purpose.

The eye is a vulnerable and precious thing. It is recognised that sight is arguably our most precious sense. Clearly, in situations where there is a potential threat to eye health, we should protect it in all hazardous situations. Any injury, especially to the eye, could have serious long-term effects.

In all impact sports (ie ball sports) there is an eye danger/hazard for the individual who wears spectacles. Children can be more 'fearless' than adults and may underestimate the risks involved.

Cricket like other sports and pastimes, has certain hazards, and children's eyes are vulnerable in a number of ways when they are involved in cricket:

These include:

- Potential contact with the cricket ball (fielding and batting)
- Excessive sunlight exposure resulting in possible damage to the media of the eye (cornea, lens, retina, iris and conjunctiva)
- Diminished light conditions resulting in a reduction in visual recognition/reaction times
- Other unexpected accidents

For the spectacle wearer (prescription and non-prescription) there are a number of issues to consider:

- Safety
- Stability of fit
- Optimum visual performance
- Eye protection



Sports frames/lenses for cricket

Key considerations

- Impact resistant frames for safety
- Polycarbonate/Trivex lenses - lightweight and impact/shatter resistant
- Head-strap for a snug, stable and safe fit under head protection

Whilst the use of a conventional frame that gives full coverage of the orbit is acceptable, it is widely recognised that the preferred option would be purpose made wrap-around sports frames with full cushioning and band attachment.

Sports frames come in all sorts of styles, colours and fittings appropriate to the individual needs and requirements. Particular care should be taken when selecting eyewear for this purpose therefore it is essential that professional advice on the supply and fitting of spectacles for children is sought at all times.



Spectacle lenses

CR39 is the most common lens material currently available and would be the minimum requirement for a young cricketer.

To ensure increased tensile strength both polycarbonate and Trivex lenses offer exceptional impact resistance which is highly desirable. Additionally, ultraviolet (UV) protection is inherent in both, which has tangible advantages for prolonged sunlight exposure.

In some cases, dependent on the prescription required, thinner, flatter and more technologically advanced lenses can be used to improve cosmetic appearance and visual performance.

Tints

Cricketers are much more exposed to long periods in the open (sunlight) and this increases the possible dangers from ultraviolet light, which can be very harmful to the eye.

Sunglasses should be worn, even on bright cloudy days, these should carry the CE marking, which will ensure the lenses offer full UV protection, both UVA (possible damage to the lens and retina) and UVB (possible damage to the cornea, iris, retina and conjunctiva).

It should be noted that UV exposure may not give the cricketer immediate problems, but could have longterm detrimental effects in adulthood.

Sunglasses are an easy way of improving sensory information: 82 per cent of which comes from our visual system. Sunglasses also help with visual comfort, the eye is less fatigued, and visual performance can improve by as much as 28 per cent resulting in:

- Improved catching
- Early pick-up of the ball in the field
- Reaction times when batting

The correct selection of tint is crucial:

- Bright conditions - rose based tints are advisable. Grey is the most neutral colour. It is likely that this will be a reasonably dark tint.
- Overcast/light-fades/flat-light days - an orange, orange brown or yellow tint would be preferable.

Such tints will tone down the light intensity but at the same time enhance contrast performance.

This could be expensive and if a general all round lens is required (cricket and general use), then polarising lenses would be best suited.

All these tints may be supplied with a mirror coating, which further protects from UV light by reflecting it from the lens.



Contact lenses

If there are no contraindications, (or strong reasons not to use them), contact lenses are an excellent alternative in terms of safety and comfort, and offer excellent all round vision.

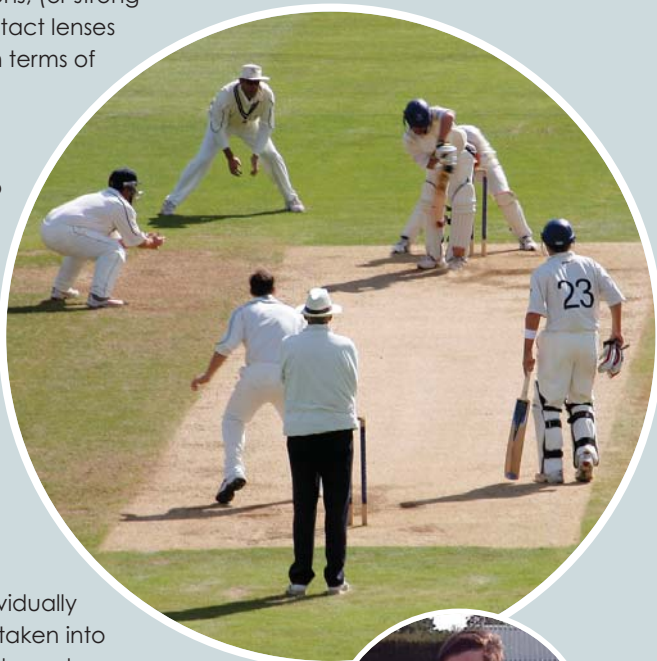
The fitting of contact lenses to children has become more popular in recent years with the introduction of disposable contact lenses. Technology advancements have allowed practitioners to confidently supply lenses for sporting purposes knowing that the health and development of the eye will not be adversely affected.

Whilst the decision will be individually based, certain factors will be taken into account as to whether a child may be fitted with contact lenses.

This would include:

- Purpose - in this case cricket
- Maturity of the child
- Ability to maintain a consistent approach to care and hygiene
- Prescription

Always seek professional advice when considering contact lenses assessment and supply.



**More information can be found
at www.ecb.co.uk**

ABDO advice for parents, coaches, junior supervisors and others supporting children and young people in Junior cricket and Open-Age cricket

Parents

1. Ensure that your child has protective lenses as recommended.
2. Ensure that the minimum frame requirements are met.
3. Be aware that it is recommended that all children should have regular eye examinations (these are funded by the NHS at no charge to parents) by an optometrist or an ophthalmic medical practitioner (eye doctor).
4. Ensure that their child's spectacles are dispensed, and fitted, by an optometrist or qualified dispensing optician.
5. Seek the advice of a registered optician as to the options available for sports eyewear.
6. Prior to any training session or match, make sure that spectacles with a sports-band are correctly fitted
7. Ensure the spectacles conform to the recommendations in this brochure.
8. If a child is injured (especially the head area), check there is no injury caused by the frame and that the lenses are intact. **If any lens breakage has occurred, seek immediate professional help.**

Coaches, junior supervisors and others

1. Prior to any training session or match, make sure that any child wearing spectacles has a correctly fitting sports-band.
2. If a child is injured (especially the head area), check there is no injury caused by the frame and that the lenses are intact. **If any lens breakage has occurred, ensure immediate professional help is sought.**

Guide for the player

1. Always wear the spectacles that you have been advised to wear when playing cricket
2. Make sure they fit well, and that any spectacles with a sports-band fit properly.
3. Have fun!

In addition to the information provided in this guidance brochure, it is recommended to refer to the guidance and regulations in place for children and young people in cricket.

These are available here:

<http://www.ecb.co.uk/ecb/directives-guidelines/ecb-recommendations-for-junior-cricket,501,BP.html>

More information can be found at

<http://www.ecb.co.uk/ecb/safeguarding-and-protecting-children/>

For further information please contact the Association of British Dispensing Opticians at general@abdo.org.uk or speak to your local optician.

If you are interested in finding a cricket club for your child please look here in the first instance: <http://www.ecb.co.uk/development/get-into-cricket/want-to-start-playing,1398,BP.html>



abdo

Association of British Dispensing Opticians

199, Gloucester Terrace, London, W2 6LD

Telephone 020 7298 5100

Fax 020 7298 5111

Email general@abdo.org.uk

Website www.abdo.org.uk

 **Twitter** [www.twitter.com/MembershipAbdo](https://twitter.com/MembershipAbdo)