

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You are walking off the field after the first innings, when the umpires call you over and informs you that: Your over rate was very slow, you are twelve minutes over the scheduled finishing time. You will be penalised six runs per over, for three overs, that will be eighteen runs added to your opponent's score! Enjoy your tea!!

What do you do! You storm into the changing room inform the players that the bloody umpires have gone and penalised you eighteen runs for a slow over rate! You blame the umpire and everybody else! Because: It is never the captain's or his players fault! Is it? Everything is the umpires' fault! Even though he has done his best and informed you of your slow over rate at the first drinks break, the second drinks break and a few other times in between.

Information:

LAW 40 TIMED OUT

40.1 Out Timed out

40.1.1 After the fall of a wicket or the retirement of a batsman, the incoming batsman must, unless Time has been called, be in position to take guard or for the other batsman to be ready to receive the next ball within 3 minutes of the dismissal or retirement. If this requirement is not met, the incoming batsman will be out, Timed out.

All this means is that: If he is facing; the new batsman has 'three minutes' to walk to the crease, take his guard and be ready to face his first ball. If not he can be 'Timed Out', all one of the fielders has to do is appeal! (How's that?)

Playing time should be stopped for injuries, time wasting, lost balls over the boundary, equipment changes by the batsmen and the keeper, third or fourth drinks breaks, when talking to the captain or the bowler and of course when talking to your colleague umpire.

If a fifty over game starts at 12:00 then the last over should begin at 15:20. The game should not finish at 15:20.

It is the same format for a T20. If a twenty over game starts at 12:00 then the last over should begin at 13:20. The game should not finish at 13:20.

The Four Minute Over !

All this means is that in the BCF leagues and T20 competitions; it should take four minutes to bowl an over. That is five overs in twenty minutes and fifteen over an hour.

A BCF league game of fifty overs should last seven hours and ten minutes or four hundred and thirty minutes. Two hundred minutes per innings and thirty minutes for the break between the innings.

This is of course all well and good on paper. Try breaking it down into separate parts!

Let's take this to the extreme!

Your team is bowling four-minute overs, no problem, you take your first wicket. One batsman walks off and the other one walks on; they have a talk as they meet and maybe change some equipment. Half way to the mat the new batsman is met by his colleague; they have a quick chat. That is all well and good as he thinks that he has time. The new batsman then asks the umpire for his guard. He takes off his gloves, walks behind the stumps, picks up the chalk, asks again for his guard, marks his guard and then asks for a second guard. He then puts the chalk back behind the stumps, picks up his gloves and puts them on, picks up his bat and proceeds to have a look at the field of play and where the fielders are standing. When he is finally ready, he will move his feet to the crease, hit his bat on the ground a few times and finally, look up at the bowler. To say that he is ready. **Nobody appeals!** On a bad day this could take nearly five minutes. If we take this to the extreme and the next eight batsmen do the same thing that could add an extra forty minutes to the game. That's ten overs you could have lost. **As I said this is taken to the extreme!**

After a bad ball and a bad shot, the captain changes his field! After a good ball and a bad shot, the captain changes the field, after a good ball and a good shot. The captain changes his field to their original positions! The captain will also change his field for either the last one or two balls of the over. After the captain has finished the wicket keeper or the bowler will then move a few players and the captain will move them back again! This 'never ending story' can add one or two minutes to every over. That could add another forty minutes extra to the game. **As I said this is taken to the extreme!**

A bowler is having a bad day, he is bowling full tosses, no-balls and wide-balls and is being hit all over the park. He is bowling 8, 9, 10 ball overs; that is an extra two - three minutes per over, plus the ball is going over the boundary and has to be retrieved by the same poor fielder who is getting more and more annoyed at the bowler and is getting slower and slower whilst he retrieves the ball. That is another few minutes added to his one, two or three overs, before he is taken off. That could mean an extra six or seven minutes. If you are in luck you only have the one bowler having a bad day! How much more time would be wasted if two or three bowlers had a few bad days?

There are two drinks breaks foreseen per innings, one about every seventeen overs. These are supposed to be short and sweet! If the players stand around having a team talk or just laughing and joking or even lying down in the sun. You could lose an extra four minutes quite easily.

The field is small, which means that the boundary is close and easy to reach! Ball after ball is flying over the boundary and into the trees, long grass, ditches, nettles and any water within reach. This could mean a lot of lost balls, which means taking time to go and look for them. It can also mean ball changes! You could lose another ten minutes or more very, very easily. (but the umpire should take a note of all stoppages!) Do you have six spare balls of different quality?

This could mean that you have lost ninety minutes. This then means that you have one hundred and ten minutes to bowl forty odd overs. You no longer have to bowl an over every four minutes. You have to bowl an over in just over two minutes. If you do not can be penalised six runs for every over you are short!

You might also have a bad umpire who does not wear a stop watch, who does not take scheduled playing time off for lost balls over the boundary, for injuries, for batsman wasting time at the crease, batsmen talking to each other between balls and overs, or changing equipment, for longer drinks breaks, or for a third or fourth drinks break in hot weather. You could just be that unlucky, but usually you should have two umpires and one of them should know what he is doing! Just cross your fingers!

You might not have an umpire that persistently warns you that you have a slow over rate.

You may just have an umpire that doesn't care if you are slow or not! He could just surprise you, as you are walking off the field after the first innings, and say: Captain! Your over rate was very slow, you are twelve minutes over the scheduled finishing time. You will be penalised six runs per over, for three overs, that will be eighteen runs added to your opponent's score! **Enjoy your tea!!**

A T20 game should take three hours or one hundred and eighty minutes. Eighty minutes per innings and twenty minutes for the break between the two innings. There are no drinks breaks. Drinks can be brought on at the fall off a wicket if it's not wasting time. Drinks can be left around the boundary, for the fielding team to go to when they are thirsty. Players should not meet in the middle of the mat for a quick talk!

The umpire will usually have a drink's break after ten over if there is hot weather. Scheduled playing time for these breaks should be stopped and not taken out of the allotted eighty minutes!

A player can be timed out in a T20 if he is not ready to face the ball in 90 second. This means that: If he is facing; the new batsman has **'90 seconds'** to walk to the crease, take his guard and be ready to face his first ball. If not, he can be 'Timed Out', all one of the fielders has to do is appeal! (How's that?) And you player walks back of the field and the 90 second count starts again!

As in the longer game. Minutes can be lost with bad bowling! An eight or nine ball over can be expensive time wise, as can balls hit over the boundary Losing wickets can also be time consuming. Field changes can be just as damaging if not more so as you have less time to win back any time you have lost.

Time is also lost when batsmen talk to each other between balls. This should be stopped by the umpire. As should any time wasting by the batsmen. Time is lost at the end of an over when fielders just amble from position to position. Time is lost when a left-handed batsman scores one run and you have to change the field and again the players just amble from position to position. Time is lost again when the right-handed batmen then only scores one run and you have to return to your original position. Time is lost when you ask a player to move and he does not want to or when you have moved a player from A to B and then the wicket keeper or bowler changes him to C and you have to change him back. All of these time-consuming activities take their toll on the over rate! Captains: Stay in control!

Players should not have to be told that, time is of the essence, that you only have a certain amount of time to finish the game. They should know this, this should be said during training, in the dressing room before the game and during the team talk before the game starts and maybe at the drinks break(s). You want them to give you 110% all of the time! It's up to the captain and his experience players to convince their team to work as a team, to work for them, to work for themselves and for the team.

This is a team sport and winning a game any game is a wonderful feeling.

Captains should know how to manage their team and a game of cricket; they should be able to work out that if his innings starts at 13:00 it should finish 16:20 for a fifty over game and 16:00 for a forty five over game or 14:20 for a T20. He is surrounded by players of similar experience or more experienced players whose job is to advise, support and help him. If things go pear shaped at the end of the day! It is more than likely, 'not the umpires' fault'!