

ICC T20 INTERNATIONAL CRICKET: SPECIAL MATCH SITUATIONS

1. SUPER OVER (TIE-BREAKING PROCEDURE)

A Super Over is the tie-breaking mechanism used in T20 International cricket when the main match ends with both teams level on runs.

1.1 When Is a Super Over Triggered?

A Super Over occurs only when the scores are tied at the end of both innings. In bilateral series matches, a Super Over is always played to determine a winner. In tournament group stage matches, the match may be declared a tie with points shared, while knockout matches always proceed to a Super Over.

1.2 Super Over Format

Each team nominates three batters to participate in the Super Over. The team's Super Over innings consists of a single over (6 legal deliveries). The innings ends either when all 6 deliveries have been bowled or when 2 of the 3 nominated batters have been dismissed, whichever comes first.

The team that batted second in the main match bats first in the Super Over. The bowling team chooses which end to bowl from. The same fielding restrictions that apply during the last over of a regular T20I innings are in effect during the Super Over.

The team that scores the most runs in the Super Over wins the match, regardless of the number of wickets lost.

1.3 If the Super Over Is Also Tied

If the Super Over itself ends in a tie, subsequent Super Overs are played until a winner is determined. There is no limit on the number of Super Overs that can be played (unless the home board has issued a prior notification limiting them due to scheduling constraints such as double-headers).

Rules for subsequent Super Overs include:

- Each consecutive Super Over must take place five minutes after the previous one ends.
- The team that batted second in the previous Super Over bats first in the next one.
- Any batter dismissed in a previous Super Over is ineligible to bat again in subsequent Super Overs.
- The bowler who bowled in the previous Super Over cannot bowl in the immediately following Super Over.
- The bowling team must bowl from the opposite end compared to the previous Super Over.
- The same balls used in the previous Super Over are reused by each team.

1.4 Historical Context

The Super Over was introduced by the ICC in 2008. Before this, tied matches were sometimes decided by the now-abolished boundary count-back rule. The most famous controversy involving this rule was the 2019 Cricket World Cup Final between England and New Zealand, where England won the ODI final on boundary count despite the Super Over being tied. This rule was subsequently abolished in favor of repeated Super Overs.

The first "double Super Over" in international cricket was played between Afghanistan and Ireland in 2024. The first "triple Super Over" in international cricket occurred during a T20I between Nepal and the Netherlands in the Scotland Tri Series on June 16, 2025.

1.5 Statistical Treatment

Runs scored and wickets taken during a Super Over are NOT added to players' career statistics. The Super Over is treated as a separate tie-breaking exercise rather than part of the main match.

2. DLS METHOD (RAIN-INTERRUPTED MATCHES)

The Duckworth-Lewis-Stern (DLS) method is the standard mathematical formula used to calculate revised targets in rain-interrupted or otherwise shortened limited-overs cricket matches.

2.1 Background and History

The method was originally devised by two English statisticians, Frank Duckworth and Tony Lewis, and was first introduced in 1997. It was officially adopted by the ICC in 1999. When Duckworth and Lewis retired, Australian statistician Steven Stern became the custodian of the method. The system was renamed the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern (DLS) method in November 2014. Stern refined the mathematical model to better reflect modern scoring patterns, particularly the higher scoring rates in T20 cricket.

2.2 Core Principle

The DLS method is based on the concept that each team in a limited-overs match has two key resources available for scoring runs:

- Overs remaining to be bowled
- Wickets in hand (wickets not yet fallen)

The method uses a mathematical "Resources Table" that assigns a percentage value to every possible combination of overs remaining and wickets lost. When rain or other interruptions reduce the available overs for one or both teams, the DLS method adjusts the target proportionally based on the resources each team has or had available.

2.3 Application in T20 Internationals

For DLS to produce a valid result in T20I cricket, a minimum of 5 overs must be bowled per side. If this minimum is not met, the match is declared "No Result." In the group stages of ICC tournaments, a No Result gives both teams one point each and no replay is scheduled.

In knockout matches of major tournaments (semi-finals and finals), the minimum overs requirement may be increased to 10 overs per side to ensure a more equitable result given the high stakes.

2.4 Scenarios for DLS Application

The DLS method comes into effect in several scenarios:

First Innings Interrupted: If rain stops play during the first innings, the batting team's total is adjusted based on the resources they lost. For example, if a team was 120/3 after 15 overs and the innings was curtailed at that point, the DLS method would calculate how many resources the team lost (the remaining 5 overs with 7 wickets in hand) and may adjust the first innings total or the second innings target accordingly.

Second Innings Interrupted: If rain interrupts the second innings, the DLS method recalculates a revised target based on how many overs and wickets the chasing team has left. The team batting second wins if they are ahead of the DLS par score at the point of interruption.

Multiple Interruptions: If a match faces more than one rain interruption, the DLS method recalculates the revised target after each stoppage, updating it based on the latest resource availability.

2.5 Par Score

The DLS par score is the score the team batting second needs to be at or above at any given point during their innings to be considered on par with the first team's performance. If the match is abandoned while the second team is batting and the minimum overs have been bowled, the result is determined by comparing the chasing team's score with the DLS par score at that point.

2.6 Criticisms of DLS in T20 Cricket

The DLS method was originally designed for ODI cricket in the 1990s. Critics have noted several issues with its application in T20 matches:

- Wickets are weighted much more heavily as a resource than overs, which can produce unintuitive targets in T20 cricket where aggressive batting and wicket-taking are more common.
- Modern T20 scoring patterns, where teams accelerate dramatically in the final overs, are not always well captured by the DLS model.
- The model is updated every year (on July 1st) to adapt to evolving scoring trends, but some argue it still lags behind the rapid changes in T20 batting approaches.

3. RESERVE DAYS IN ICC TOURNAMENTS

For major ICC tournament knockout matches, a reserve day may be allocated to allow the match to be completed the following day if weather prevents a result on the scheduled day. If the match was already in progress, it resumes from where it was stopped, rather than starting over. Group stage matches typically do not have reserve days and are declared No Result if weather prevents the minimum overs from being bowled.

4. CONCUSSION SUBSTITUTE RULES

The ICC introduced the concussion substitute rule across all international formats on August 1, 2019. This rule was enacted in the wake of the tragic death of Australian cricketer Phillip Hughes in 2014, who was fatally struck by a bouncer during a domestic match.

4.1 When Can a Concussion Substitute Be Used?

If a player sustains a concussion or suspected concussion during a match (including during pre-match warm-ups), they may be replaced by a substitute player for the remainder of the match. The injury must occur on the field during match-related activities.

4.2 The Request Process

The team's medical staff or manager must submit a Concussion Replacement Request to the ICC Match Referee. This request must include:

- Details of the incident that caused the injury

- A medical assessment confirming concussion or suspected concussion
- The identity of the proposed replacement player and justification for their selection

The request must be submitted as soon as possible after the incident.

4.3 Like-for-Like Requirement

The replacement player must be a "like-for-like" substitute, meaning they should be comparable to the injured player in terms of their role and skillset. The match referee assesses the likely contribution the concussed player would have made for the rest of the match and compares it to the normal role of the proposed replacement.

If the match referee determines the replacement would give the team an unfair advantage, restrictions may be imposed. For example, if a part-time bowler is injured and the proposed replacement is a specialist fast bowler, the referee could restrict the replacement from bowling.

4.4 2025 Rule Amendment

Following several controversies around the interpretation of "like-for-like" (most notably the Harshit Rana-Shivam Dube incident in the 2025 India-England T20I series), the ICC amended the rule in 2025. Teams are now required to name five designated concussion substitutes before the toss:

- One wicketkeeper
- One batter
- One fast bowler
- One spinner
- One all-rounder

If a concussion substitute themselves gets injured during the match, the match referee may approve a further replacement from outside the initial five, following the existing like-for-like eligibility protocols.

The 2025 rule changes took effect on June 17 for Tests, July 2 for ODIs, and July 10 for T20Is.

4.5 Stand-Down Period

A player diagnosed with a concussion during a match must observe a mandatory minimum stand-down period of seven days before being permitted to play again in any format. This is a player welfare measure to ensure adequate recovery time.

4.6 Match Referee Authority

The match referee has the final say on whether to approve a concussion substitution. The opposing team does not have the right to appeal the match referee's decision.

5. INJURY REPLACEMENT (2025 TRIAL RULE)

Effective from October 2025, the ICC introduced a trial rule allowing injury replacements beyond concussions. Under this new provision, a player who suffers a serious injury on the field of play at any time after the match has started (including during any pre-match warm-up period) may be replaced for the remainder of the match by a fully participating like-for-like player. This extends the existing concussion substitute framework to cover other serious injuries.

6. WIDE BALL RULE UPDATE (2025 TRIAL)

As a trial effective October 2025, the ICC introduced a modified wide ball rule in T20 Internationals. The new rule provides leniency for bowlers when the batter moves around the crease. The position of the batter's legs at the point of delivery is now used as the reference point for determining a wide, rather than the original guard position. A ball that passes between the leg stump and the protected area marker at the popping crease will not be called a wide. The protected area marker line has been extended to the popping crease to serve as a visual guide for umpires making wide ball decisions.