NATIONAL SCHOOLS CRICKET CUPS

DAVID ENGLISH CUP · NATIONAL STATE SCHOOLS CUP

National Under 13 Cups

Competition Regulations 2027

ENGLISH SCHOOLS CRICKET ASSOCIATION

The National Under 13 Cups are knockout Twenty20 competitions for school teams, run by the English Schools Cricket Association (ESCA) as part of the National Schools Cricket Cups. They are played in two stages: a county Under 12 competition in one year, and in the following year two national Under 13 competitions drawn from it:

- **The David English Cup**, open to every county winner; and
- **The National State Schools Under 13 Cup** (the State Schools Cup), for state schools that won their county Under 12 competition or were the highest-placed state school in it.

How to use these regulations. Sections 1 to 3 apply to every match. Then read the section for your competition: section 4 for the county competitions, section 5 for the David English Cup, or section 6 for the State Schools Cup. Each of those sections contains everything that applies only to that competition.

At a glance

	County competitions (U12)	David English Cup (U13)	State Schools Cup (U13)
Who plays	All schools	County Under 12 winners	State school county winners and highest-placed state schools
Run by	County Organiser	ESCA (Competition Organiser named on the draw)	ESCA (National Organiser named on the draw)
Pitch length	18 yards	19 yards	19 yards
Fielding circle	Marked if possible	Must be marked	Marked if possible; must be marked for the Final

	County competitions (U12)	David English Cup (U13)	State Schools Cup (U13)
Powerplay (first 6 overs, max 2 outside circle)	No	Yes	Final only
Revised targets	Run rate	DLS where possible	Run rate
Umpires	One per school	ACO members preferred; ESCA appoints for the Final	Staff before the semi-finals; qualified independent umpires for the semi-finals; ESCA appoints for the Final
Scorers	One per school; an umpire may also score	A competent scorer per school	Staff may umpire and score before the semi-finals; a separate scorer per team from the semi-finals
Entry fee and costs	Any fee set locally	No entry fee	No entry fee; financial support after two rounds; semi-final umpires and balls reimbursed
Disputes	County Organiser	ESCA General Secretary	ESCA General Secretary

1. The competitions and entry

1.1 **Organisation.** The competitions are run by ESCA; the county competitions are organised locally by County Organisers (section 4). The organisers for each national round are named on the draw. Fixtures and results for the national rounds are published on the competition Play-Cricket site: escacompetitions.play-cricket.com.

1.2 **Who may enter.** Entry to the county competitions is open to all schools. Places in the national rounds are by qualification from the county competitions (sections 5 and 6).

1.3 **Two stages.** The competitions are played in two stages:

(a) the **county competitions**, played within each county for pupils under 12 in the first year (section 4); and

(b) the **national rounds**, played in the following year for pupils under 13, in two branches:

(i) the David English Cup, between the county winners (section 5); and

(ii) the National State Schools Under 13 Cup, between qualifying state schools (section 6).

1.4 **State school county winners.** A state school that won its county competition is automatically included in the State Schools Cup, and may also take part in the David English Cup.

1.5 **Teams.** Teams may include both girls and boys.

1.6 **Entry fee.** There is no entry fee for the national rounds. Any entry fee or affiliation charge for the county competitions is decided locally by the County Organiser.

1.7 **Play-Cricket.** Every school in the national rounds must have a Play-Cricket site by 30 November 2026, so that it can be put into the draw and fixtures and results can be recorded. This is not required for the county competitions.

2. Eligibility

2.1 **Age.** In the county competitions, players must be under 12 at midnight on the previous 31 August. In the 2027 national rounds, players must be under 13 on 31 August 2026.

2.2 **School roll.** Players must be permanent bona fide pupils of the school, following its normal curriculum. In the national rounds, players must have been on the school roll by 1 February 2027. In both the county competitions and the national rounds, players temporarily on roll for the summer term may not play.

2.3 **National squad.** A school's team in the national rounds may include pupils who did not play in the county competitions, provided they meet rules 2.1 and 2.2.

2.4 **Overage players.** In the national rounds, a player who is overage but in the same year group as the eligible players may be allowed to play under ESCA's Overage Players Policy, published at escaonline.co.uk. The school must apply to the ESCA General Secretary by 31 March 2027, and must not field the player until permission has been given. In the county competitions, rule 2.1 applies unless the County Organiser has granted a local dispensation.

2.5 **Confirmation and penalties.** In the national rounds, the General Secretary's decision on eligibility is final. A school that fields an ineligible player will be removed from the competition and may be barred from taking part for up to two further years.

3. Playing conditions for all matches

The Laws of Cricket (2017 Code, 4th edition 2026) and the ECB's guidance for junior cricket apply, except as set out below. These conditions apply to every match. Pitch length, the fielding circle and Powerplay, and the method for revised targets differ between competitions, and are set out in sections 4, 5 and 6.

3.1 **Teams.** A team may consist of 12 players, of whom 11 may bat and only 11 may field at any one time.

3.2 **Stumps, ball and boundaries.** In line with ECB junior format guidance:

(a) the stumps are 27 inches by 8 inches;

(b) the match ball is a junior hard ball weighing 4.75 ounces (135 grams), as the ECB specifies for Under 12 and Under 13 cricket, in both the county competitions and the national rounds; the pink ball in rule 3.3 must be of this size; and

(c) boundaries should be no more than 50 metres from the centre of the pitch, with a safety margin beyond the boundary.

3.3 **Match ball and clothing.** A pink ball must be used, and the same type of ball must be used in both innings. The home school provides both match balls. Teams play in coloured clothing; whites or normal PE kit are also acceptable.

3.4 **Duration.** One innings per side of 20 overs.

3.5 **Result.** The side scoring more runs wins.

3.6 **Ties.** If scores are level, a Super Over decides the match: the team batting second bats first; the loss of two wickets ends the over; if still level, the side hitting more boundaries in the Super Over wins; if still level, a count-back from the last ball decides it. The fielding restrictions in force at the end of the match apply.

3.7 **Bowling.** No bowler may bowl more than 4 overs, or one-fifth of the overs in a reduced innings (rounded so that the minimum number of bowlers get one extra over). If a bowler cannot finish an over, another bowler completes it, and it counts as a full over for both. The current ECB Fast Bowling Directives apply.

3.8 **Fielding circle.**

(a) The fielding circle is two semi-circles of 25 yards' radius around the middle stump at each end, joined by straight lines. Where it is marked, this is done with continuous painted white lines or dots at 5-yard intervals. Each competition's section says whether the fielding circle must be marked.

(b) No more than 5 fielders may be on the leg side at the instant of delivery.

(c) The number of fielders allowed outside the fielding circle, and whether there is a Powerplay, are set out in each competition's section.

(d) A breach is called and signalled No ball by the square-leg umpire.

3.9 **Close fielders.** No fielder other than the wicketkeeper may stand closer than 11 yards (10 metres) from the middle stump, except behind the wicket on the off side, until the batter has played at the ball, in line with ECB junior fielding regulations.

3.10 **Short-pitched bowling.** Law 41.6 applies, with these additions. Regardless of how wide of the striker it is, no more than one delivery per over may pass, or would have passed, clearly above shoulder height of the striker standing upright at the popping crease. Each further such delivery is called and signalled No ball. A bowler no-balled a second time in an innings for this is removed from the attack for the rest of the innings.

3.11 **Free hit.** The delivery after any No ball is a free hit, on which the batter can only be out in ways allowed from a No ball. Fielders may not change position for a free hit unless the striker changes.

3.12 **Delayed start and interruptions.**

(a) If the start is delayed, no overs are lost until one hour after the scheduled start. After that, overs are reduced at one over per 3 minutes 45 seconds lost, to a minimum of 5 overs per side.

(b) If play is interrupted after the first hour, overs are reduced at one over per 3 minutes 45 seconds lost from the time of the interruption. An interruption in the first hour is treated as in (a).

(c) If the stoppage is in the first innings, overs are reduced so that both sides face the same number of overs (minimum 5 each).

(d) If the stoppage is in the second innings, overs are reduced so that a result is obtained.

3.13 **Revised targets.** If the side batting second has its overs reduced below those of the side batting first, its target is revised by the method set out in its competition's section. Under the run-rate method, the target is in proportion to the run rate of the side batting first: for example, if the side batting first scores 120 in 20 overs and the second innings is reduced to 10 overs, the target is 61.

3.14 **Minimum for a result.** Each side must have the chance to face at least 5 overs for a match to count. If this cannot be achieved, the result is decided by a bowl-out (rule 3.15) or, as a last resort, the toss of a coin.

3.15 **Bowl-out.** Five players from each side bowl two deliveries each at an unguarded wicket from the length of the pitch used in that competition. The side hitting the wicket most often wins; if equal, the same players bowl one ball each in turn until there is a winner.

3.16 **Safety.** Batters, and wicketkeepers standing up to the stumps, must wear helmets, in line with ECB guidance for young players.

3.17 **Conduct.** Players, staff and spectators are bound by the Laws of Cricket (including Law 41 and Law 42), the ECB General Conduct Regulations and the ESCA Disciplinary Policy. Umpires should report any breach, including poor conduct by staff, to the ESCA General Secretary (info@escaonline.co.uk), copying in the school's teacher in charge, within 48 hours, using the ESCA Disciplinary Report Form, available from escaonline.co.uk.

4. County competitions (Under 12)

4.1 **Organisation.** The county competitions are organised by County Organisers, appointed by the County Schools Cricket Association or the County Board, whichever is responsible for schools competitions in that county. County Organisers make the county draw.

4.2 **Format.** The county competition should normally be a knockout cup. The County Organiser may use another format, such as groups, a league stage or festival days, provided it produces:

(a) a single county winner; and

(b) a clear order of finish, so that the highest-placed state school or schools can be identified (rule 6.2).

4.3 **Timing.** All county competitions, including their finals, must be completed by 30 September of the year in which they are played. A county that has not completed its competition, including the final, by that date forfeits its places in both national cups.

4.4 **County return.** ESCA will request this information from each county as part of its annual data return. By 30 September, the County Organiser gives ESCA, in that return:

(a) the county winner, with its contact teacher's name and email; and

(b) the highest-placed state school or schools, with the round each reached, and their contact details.

4.5 **Fixtures.** Unless the County Organiser decides otherwise, the first-named school in each pairing is drawn at home and makes the first contact with its opponents.

4.6 **Umpires and scorers.** Each school provides one umpire and one scorer for all county matches. In county matches only, an umpire may also act as scorer.

4.7 **Results.** The winning school informs the County Organiser of the result.

4.8 **Playing conditions.** Section 3 applies, with these conditions for the county competitions:

(a) the pitch is 18 yards long;

(b) there is no Powerplay: no more than 5 fielders may be outside the fielding circle at the instant of delivery, throughout the innings. If the fielding circle cannot be marked, the umpires use their judgement to decide whether fielders are inside or outside it; and

(c) revised targets are set by the run-rate method (rule 3.13).

4.9 **Local arrangements.** Round deadlines, replays of weather-affected matches, transport and withdrawals in the county competitions are decided locally by the County Organiser, within the 30 September deadline in rule 4.3.

4.10 **Counties with no competition.** Where a county runs no Under 12 competition, ESCA may, at its discretion, accept a school from that county into the David English Cup on terms it sets.

4.11 **Disputes.** Disputes in the county competitions are decided by the County Organiser.

5. David English Cup national rounds

5.1 **Qualification.** Each county's Under 12 winner from the previous season qualifies for the David English Cup. Each county has one place. If the county winner declines, the place may be passed to the county runner-up.

5.2 **Draw.** The draw is made by ESCA and circulated to the schools concerned. It is based on the distance between schools, with regional rounds leading to the national semi-finals and Final. It names the Competition Organiser and the deadline date for each round.

5.3 **Home school.** The first-named school in each pairing is drawn at home. It is responsible for the arrangements and for making the first contact with its opponents. Semi-finals are played on the ground of the first-named school.

5.4 **Deadlines.** Matches must be played by the deadline dates in the draw. If the original match cannot take place, an alternative date before the deadline may be agreed. Only in exceptional circumstances may a match be played after the deadline, and then only with the advance agreement of the Competition Organiser named on the draw. The alternative date is then binding, and a side that cancels it must give a walkover to the other side.

5.5 **Weather.** If rain prevents a result, the match is replayed before the deadline date for that round. Only one replay is allowed. If no result is reached, or a replay cannot be arranged before the deadline, the result is decided by a bowl-out (rule 3.15) or, as a last resort, the toss of a coin.

5.6 **Results.** The home school posts the result on Play-Cricket within 24 hours, showing both teams' runs, wickets and overs, and also emails the result to the Competition Organiser. Scoring on Play-Cricket Scorer is preferred but not compulsory.

5.7 **Transport.** Each school is responsible for its own transport.

5.8 **Withdrawal.** A school that has to withdraw must tell its opponents and the Competition Organiser as early as possible. Failure to do so may prevent the school taking part the following year.

5.9 **Playing conditions.** Section 3 applies, with these conditions for the David English Cup:

(a) the pitch is 19 yards long;

(b) the fielding circle must be marked. In the first 6 overs of an uninterrupted innings (the Powerplay), no more than 2 fielders may be outside the fielding circle at the instant of delivery; after that, no more than 5. In a reduced innings the Powerplay is reduced in proportion, to 30% of the overs rounded to the nearest whole over (for example, 3 overs in a 10-over innings, or 2 overs in an 8-over innings); and

(c) revised targets are set by the DLS method using Play-Cricket Scorer where possible, with par scores shown throughout the second innings; otherwise by the run-rate method (rule 3.13).

5.10 **Umpires.** All umpires should be members of the ECB Association of Cricket Officials (ACO). A school may provide its own competent umpire if the opposing school agrees. Where umpires are paid, the two schools share the cost. ESCA will appoint umpires for the Final.

5.11 **Scorers.** Each school provides a competent scorer. Ideally one scorer uses electronic scoring, to support DLS calculations and uploading to Play-Cricket.

5.12 **Schools in both cups.** A school may play in both national cups, with the same or different players in each, provided each player meets section 2. The two Finals are played one after the other on the same day, so a school may play in both.

5.13 **The Final.** The Final is played on Wednesday 7 July 2027 at Oundle School. ESCA meets the costs of the ground, umpires, balls and meals. The Final will not be rearranged. If a result cannot be reached, the trophy is shared.

5.14 **Disputes.** Disputes about results or any other matter are referred to the ESCA General Secretary, whose decision is final.

6. State Schools Cup national rounds

6.1 **State schools.** Only state schools are eligible to take part. For these regulations, a state school is a maintained school or an academy. The General Secretary's decision on whether a school is a state school is final.

6.2 **Qualification.** A state school qualifies if, in its county's Under 12 competition in the previous season, it:

(a) won the competition; or

(b) was the highest-placed state school, where an independent school won. Where two or more state schools are joint highest-placed (for example, both losing in the same round), each qualifies.

Placing is decided on the round reached, as certified by the County Organiser in the county return (rule 4.4).

6.3 **Declined places.** If a qualifying school declines, the County Organiser may nominate the next-highest-placed state school, by a date set by ESCA. A county's places may not otherwise be transferred, and other schools from the county may not enter.

6.4 **Draw and organisers.** The draw is made by ESCA and circulated to the schools concerned. It is based on the distance between schools, with regional rounds leading to the national semi-finals and Final. It names the National Organiser and the deadline date for each round.

6.5 **Home school.** The first-named school in each pairing is drawn at home. It is responsible for the arrangements and for making the first contact with its opponents. Semi-finals are played on the ground of the first-named school.

6.6 **Deadlines.** Matches must be played by the deadline dates in the draw. If the original match cannot take place, an alternative date before the deadline may be agreed. Only in exceptional circumstances may a match be played after the deadline, and then only with the advance agreement of the National Organiser named on the draw. The alternative date is then binding, and a side that cancels it must give a walkover to the other side.

6.7 **Weather.** If rain prevents a result, the match is replayed before the deadline date for that round. Only one replay is allowed. If no result is reached, or a replay cannot be arranged before the deadline, the result is decided by a bowl-out (rule 3.15) or, as a last resort, the toss of a coin.

6.8 **Results.** The home school posts the result on Play-Cricket within 24 hours, showing both teams' runs, wickets and overs, and also emails the result to the National Organiser. Scoring on Play-Cricket Scorer is preferred but not compulsory.

6.9 **Transport.** Each school is responsible for its own transport.

6.10 **Withdrawal.** A school that has to withdraw must tell its opponents and the National Organiser as early as possible. Failure to do so may prevent the school taking part the following year.

6.11 **Playing conditions.** Section 3 applies, with these conditions for the State Schools Cup:

(a) the pitch is 19 yards long;

(b) **before the Final**, there is no Powerplay: no more than 5 fielders may be outside the fielding circle at the instant of delivery, throughout the innings. If the fielding circle cannot be marked, the umpires use their judgement to decide whether fielders are inside or outside it;

(c) **in the Final**, the fielding circle must be marked. In the first 6 overs of an uninterrupted innings (the Powerplay), no more than 2 fielders may be outside the fielding circle at the instant of delivery; after that, no more than 5. In a reduced innings the Powerplay is reduced in proportion, to 30% of the overs rounded to the nearest whole over (for example, 3 overs in a 10-over innings, or 2 overs in an 8-over innings); and

(d) revised targets are set by the run-rate method (rule 3.13).

6.12 **Umpires.** Members of staff may umpire in the rounds before the semi-finals. For the semi-finals, qualified independent umpires must be appointed. ESCA will appoint umpires for the Final.

6.13 **Scorers.** In the rounds before the semi-finals, a member of staff may both umpire and score. From the semi-finals onwards, each team must have a separate person responsible for scoring.

6.14 **Financial support.** A school that has played more than two rounds may apply to ESCA for financial support towards the cost of cricket balls, transport and other fixture costs. For the semi-finals, ESCA will reimburse the hosting school for the cost of the umpires and the match balls. This support applies to the State Schools Cup only.

6.15 **Schools in both cups.** A school may play in both national cups, with the same or different players in each, provided each player meets section 2. The two Finals are played one after the other on the same day, so a school may play in both.

6.16 **The Final.** The Final is played on Wednesday 7 July 2027 at Oundle School. ESCA meets the costs of the ground, umpires, balls and meals. The Final will not be rearranged. If a result cannot be reached, the trophy is shared.

6.17 **Disputes.** Disputes about results or any other matter are referred to the ESCA General Secretary, whose decision is final.

Mark Fenton, General Secretary
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