

Cricket: The practical exam for 2019

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A few days ago, I summarized the rules of cricket for the casual viewer, and the recently-completed 2019 Cricket World Cup finals were quite a practical exam. The match ended in a tie, which is highly unlikely. It forced a *super-over*, which itself also ended in a tie, which is highly unlikely. The winner was then decided by comparing in-game statistics.¹

None of that super-over and ultimate tie-breaker stuff was covered in my [quick summary](#) because, c'mon, it never happens.

Except when it happens.

A circumstance I lumped under “For various offenses” played a role in the final moments of the match as well: A fielder threw the ball out of bounds (caused by a deflection off a batsman’s bat). This is a four-run award in addition to the runs that had already been scored, or were about to score. Not only did this award runs that New Zealand could scarcely afford to concede, the number of times the ball goes out of bounds (**boundaries**) is the primary statistic in the ultimate tie-breaker. Really bad luck for the Kiwis, losing on a fluke play like this.

My quick summary of the rules wasn’t really enough to allow you to fully appreciate the insanity of how that match finished, a match which is already being described as “[the most dramatic match in cricket history](#).”

Sorry.

You can watch a summary of the match [here](#).

At the 10-second mark of that video is an LBW review, which apparently has gotten all high-tech, but remains just as controversial as ever. The ball missed the bat and struck the batsman’s leg. The umpire ruled this as leg-before-wicket, meaning that the ball would have hit the wicket if the batsman were not standing in the way. The batting team appealed, and the computer simulation projected that the ball would have missed the wicket by a small margin. The appeal was therefore upheld, and the umpire’s call was reversed.

Bonus chatter: Cricket statistics are a whole chapter unto themselves. The score was given as New Zealand 241/8 to England 241. This was a limited-overs match, so this means (I hope I get this right) that New Zealand scored 241 runs and gave up 8 outs, while England scored 241 runs and used up all of their outs. If a team uses up all 10 of its outs, then you don't write "/10"; that's the default.

The other statistics are a complete mystery to me. They're just a jumble of numbers.

¹ As explained on [Hang Up and Listen](#), it's as if Game 7 of the NBA finals were tied after regulation, were tied again after overtime, then declared the winner to be the team that made the most three-point shots.

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