

Cronkers

A game for several people and a tree

My lad and I invented the game of “cronkers”—a cross between cricket and conkers. This is a very seasonal game, dependent on finding well-laden conker tree. The only other equipment needed is an old cricket bat. Here are the rules:

Set up a wicket a reasonable distance from the tree and a bowling point in line between the tree and the wicket. The wicket can be something like a stick or a wellie or the stump of another tree.

The bowler collects a number of suitable conkers and bowls them underarm to the batsman, one over at a time, trying to hit the wicket. The batsman tries to hit the conker and scores “runs” by various hits:

- 1 run if the conker goes into or through the tree in any way
- 2 runs if the conker hits the trunk of the tree
- 4 runs if any conkers are dislodged from the tree (any number)
- 6 runs if the batsman can get the conker right over the tree

The batsman is out if:

- he is caught
- the bowler hits the stumps
- an agreed number of fair balls (usually 3) are missed in the over

If there are more than two players, one who isn't batting or bowling acts as umpire/fielder and swaps with the bowler after each over. The umpire's duty is to judge whether balls are fair or not. Any number of fielders can participate and it's useful to employ smaller children as conker collectors.

Some players like to include the one-bounce-one-hand rule for catches, and it is entirely up to the bowler what size of conker is bowled. Wide throws are taken again and deliveries above shoulder height are frowned upon. Players should agree before starting whether to observe an LBW rule.

It can be particularly satisfying when a conker explodes on being hit, but such a strike is its own reward as it earns no runs.

(Philip & Elwood King, Autumn 2004)