

Mobile Cricket Nets for the Green

Analysis of Mobile Nets at Woodcote Cricket Club

The cricket ground at Woodcote is sited on the village green, situated in open space at the cross roads in the middle of the village. The ground consists of a square, surrounded by a grass outfield that it shared with the football club. There is no artificial surface of any description: no artificial pitch on the square, and no dedicated net area.

Woodcote Cricket Club owns a mobile cricket-net cage. By necessity, this is secured in a locked pen located just behind a tall hedge that separates the green from a set of allotments.

The net measures 10-feet wide by 10-feet high by 23-feet in length. This is the smallest (and cheapest) mobile net-cage that is readily available on the market. It has a single pair of wheels at the front, and a detachable bar at the back that allows two adults to walk the cage into position. See:

http://www.3dgroundequipment.co.uk/osb/itemdetails.cfm/ID/Mobile-Portanet_25

The layout of their green allows plenty of room for this net-cage to be manoeuvred in and out of the pen and over to the square.

However, the most striking property of this net is how small it really is: it probably works fine when used on the square, but cannot provide anywhere near the protection required in a multi-net lane environment.

Analysis of Mobile Net-Cage Options for the Green

A scale drawing of the current entrance to the barn area clearly shows that even a net-cage as small as that described above cannot be moved round the corner at the south-east end of the Green. If the undergrowth was cut back to level with the hedge on the west-side of the entrance, and the gate-post removed and hedge cut back to level with the barn on the east-side of the entrance, then theoretically the net could be made to go round the corner - but only with at least three perpendicular lifts at alternating ends of the cage - and given that there are no wheels at one end, and no detachable bar at the other, such action is liable to cause damage both to the net-cage and to those involved in moving the net-cage.

Research into the *concertina* net-cage option suggests that there is only one model available:

<http://www.johnjacricketsupplies.com/concertina-net/>

and that this is very much designed to be permanently fixed at one end - not to be pushed across the width of the Green, and certainly not around corners in its crumpled state.

So, the options are to either store the net-cage on the Green, or to cut a 15-foot gap in the hedge in order to store them by the barn.

As is the case at Woodcote, the net-cage will need to be secured, preferably in a locked pen.

Analysis of the safety aspects of the net-cage solution is that, if the Woodcote net-cage were used to surround a single net-lane, then, in order to protect those waiting to bowl in a second lane, the two lane-centres would need to be separated by a distance of no less than 12 yards. If one went for the largest-available length of standalone mobile net-cage (35-feet):

<http://www.durantcricket.co.uk/outdoor-cricket-cages>

then the lane-centres would need to be at least 8 yards apart.

Thus, in order to provide a “twin-lane” (i.e. single-surface) facility with adequate protection for the bowlers in the other net, a back-to-back two-cage solution would be required for each lane (i.e. four net-cages in total). See:

<http://www.johnjacricketsupplies.com/county-tunnel-cages/>

This solution gives a total coverage of 20m x 3.66m x 3.66m, and has the distinct advantage of meeting the ECB recommendation for minimum height of net – an absolute must when catering for young spin-bowlers.

Conclusion

It is possible to build a twin-lane net-facility that incorporates mobile net-cages, subject to the following requirements:

- 1) A 15-foot wide gap, with lockable gate(s), must be made in the hedge that runs along the east end of the Green.
- 2) Each net must be surrounded by a two back-to-back mobile net-cage measuring 10m x 3.66m x 3.66m when in active use.
- 3) All mobile net-cages must be secured in a locked pen when not in use.
- 4) Given the enormous cost involved in creating each net surface, and the absence of any permanent structure to protect it, the full length of the twin-net area (26m x 8m) must be permanently roped off, all year round, when it is not in active use.

Proposal

- a) Warborough & Shillingford Cricket Club to create a twin full-length artificial net surface, measuring approximately 26m x 8m, parallel to and an appropriate distance from the hedge, that will be permanently roped off all year round when not in use;
- b) Warborough & Shillingford Cricket Club to purchase four mobile cricket net-cages, each measuring 10m x 3.66m x 3.66m;
- c) Warborough Parish Council to create a 15-foot wide gated access point in the hedge; and
- d) Warborough Parish Council to build a secure pen behind the barn for housing the four mobile net-cages.

Martyn Johnson
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