

Fun, Skills, Winning. 100 Years of Cricket Gamification

How do you get people engaged in fighting climate change, especially people playing the sport that is most threatened by it? One answer might be to make a game of it or, to use the *nom du jour*, gamification. Making it Fun is what Carbon Champions has been working on, and will be launching next week.

The challenge comes after a decade of fighting climate change at organisation level at Eight Ash Green Cricket Club. The committee has done all it can to measure offset and reduce its carbon emissions. The battle now is not just to engage with individual members, but to change individual behaviours.

After a lot of faffing around, we are borrowing ideas from earlier games. These simple games, usually involving dice, provide a framework which we can steadily embed the changes required. To start with we are adding new dimensions such as decade and climate. Players' climate actions improve the probability of playing and winning. Or not, as the case may be.

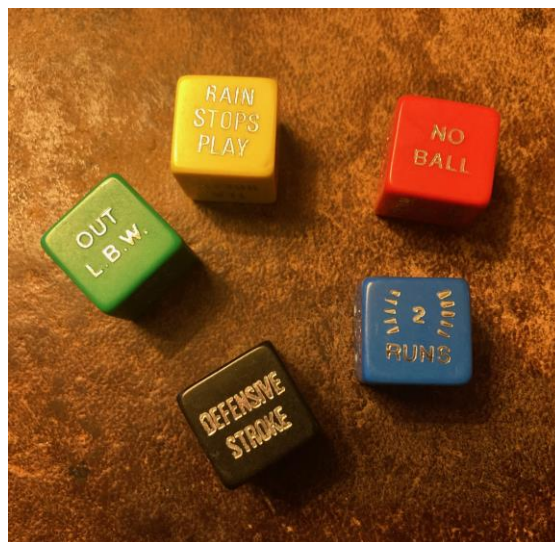


The original 2 dice 'Owzthat' game

Eight Ash Green needs opposition and this comes in the form of cricket clubs from Suffolk. This may seem odd (EAG is physically in Essex) but many of our games are against Suffolk clubs and importantly this phase of the project is funded by Suffolk's Net Zero Innovation Fund. So we are affiliating to Suffolk both virtually and in reality.

Our first version adds Decade and Climate dice to the *Owzthat* game played by generations of schoolboys. Rolling the Decade dice adjust the probability for how good or bad the Climate dice might be. At present probabilities are based upon a physical die with six sides but there is no reason why virtual dice cannot have more sides to provide greater flexibility.

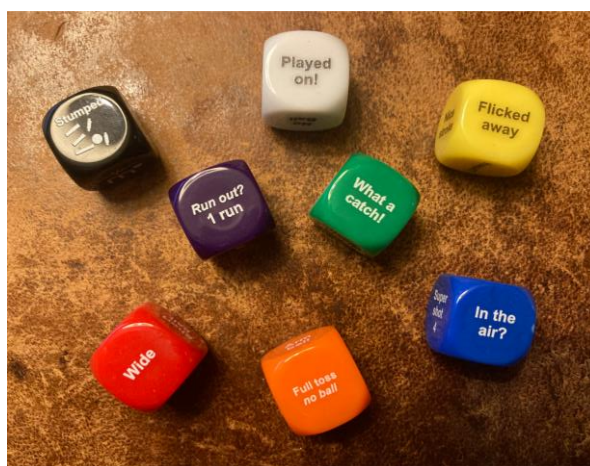
In future Decades the probabilities of playing decrease as Climate worsens. This means that teams can't play which reduces their ability to score points and top league tables. When they do play, matches use the original Batting and Fielding dice to create totals. A version from the 1940s explains the rules, and still works nearly 100 years later.



Cricket Dice introduces a (rarely used) Conditions die

Cricket Dice introduces a Conditions die which bizarrely is used at the end of an innings. *Pocket Sports Test Cricket* has eight skills-related dice. Future versions of our game will increase flexibility and complexity. We have ideas here, but will be inviting players to design future configurations. (Empowerment of users is a core drive in effective gamification.)

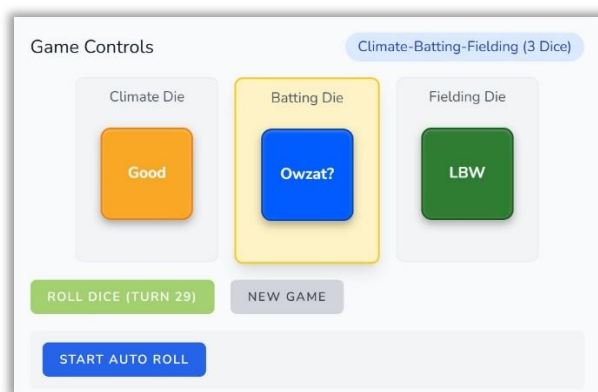
The question of who plays who is answered by taking the 84 clubs in Suffolk and arranging them in 6 leagues of 14 clubs each. These were originally chosen at random, but were then reorganised based on proximity to reduce transport emissions. Yes this is a virtual game, but we still need to practise what we preach!



Pocket Sports Test Cricket has 8 dice, all playing related

Each club plays other clubs in its division twice during the next 26 weeks. Creating a virtual league overcomes problems with Suffolk clubs having significant variety in their number of teams and fixtures and playing teams outside of the county. Scores are generated based on fixed probabilities to start with, but that will all change.

Games take place as scheduled (weather permitting ...) whether clubs have players registered to the game or not. Registering players who then take action improves the club's ability to win matches. Building a squad of active individuals is rewarded both in our virtual game and in the real world. For the ultimate aim of this game is '*deeds not words*' (Emeline Pankhurst).

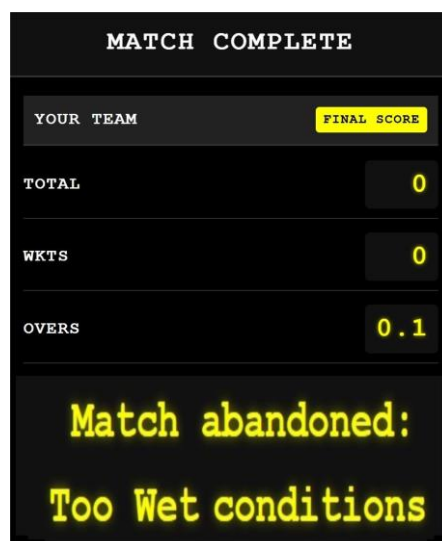


Carbon Champions game starts with 3 dice and puts Conditions first

Although each match can be completed in milliseconds, the match replicates the supine pace of recreational cricket. Matches take two to four hours to complete on Saturday afternoons. Supporters can watch the dice roll, but will hopefully have better things to do. Like real leagues, results have to be submitted promptly with all results and tables updated by 10pm.

As each week progresses, players can improve the probability of winning matches. Just like in real cricket, they can acquire and deploy skills to get better. The difference here is that the skills are fighting climate change and, crucially, taking action to make this happen. This is where the second and third part of the project comes in.

Skills are acquired from quick, simple online courses. Winning is achieved using a dedicated carbon calculator. Developed over the past three years, this application projects carbon emissions for every club in Suffolk in three dimensions: scope, level and time. Every club has a map towards Carbon Net Zero 2030 whether they want it or not.



Without action, what future decades will increasingly look like

It will be interesting to see how providing this game will change the interaction between players teams and clubs. Initiating action at player level is crucial as most clubs have neither the people, money, time nor skills to address the important and increasingly urgent issue of fighting climate change. Weekly updates will be provided from now on, please register to receive directly.