



## Selecting a new Cricket Bat

It is **important that you personally select the correct size and weight** of cricket bat for you, everyone is an individual. In many cases junior cricketers purchase bats too large and heavy for their size because they think it will make the ball go further. In practice it has the opposite effect, timing is out, loss of technique, and there performance suffers.

### Making sure it's the right bat for you:

Go to a cricket store (i.e. Cricket Express – [www.cricketexpress.co.nz](http://www.cricketexpress.co.nz)) and **get a feel for the bats**. Take your normal batting stance and pickup different bats and practice a cover drive shot to get the feel of it. Every bat has a different pickup, the weight maybe in the middle or in the toe of the bat, make sure it feels right for you.

One of the most important decisions to make is **Kashmir Willow** or **English Willow**.

Kashmir Willow is considered an inferior wood compared to English Willow and for that reason all the Pro's use English Willow bats.

### Kashmir Willow:

- Kashmir Willow is a lot cheaper in comparison to English Willow approximately say \$50.
- Would recommend it to juniors playing Kiwi, J20/20 and Super 8's (ie. Softer ball like an incrediball) not a hard ball as it may dent and crack the bat.
- But Kashmir Willow is usually denser, heavier and more brittle than English Willow.
- You generally do not need to knock in Kashmir Willow bats.

### English Willow:

- English Willow is more expensive and an equivalent bat might cost approximately \$200.
- English Willow is less dense than Kashmir Willow, it can be bulkier, but not necessarily heavier than Kashmir Willow.
- All English Willow bats need to be 'knocked in'. This improves the performance of the bat and you will get better hitting power from it.
- Cheaper English Willow bats will have a polycarbon cloth cover, these still needs to be knocked in, but not as much.
- Some brands bleach the wood to take out imperfections in the timber. Unbleached bats shows knots which may not make the bat look as nice, but it shows harder areas of the bat, which the ball will ping off the blade of the bat.

### Cricket Bat Blades are graded as follows:-

**Grade 1** – This is the finest Willow; unblemished with 8-9 tight straight grains running down the bat evenly spaced and straight. There may be a small amount of red wood running along the side of the blade and small knots in the back or on the edge.

**Grade 2** – This is a very good quality with tight straight grain but having small visual blemishes or a larger area of red wood, neither of these slight defects will affect the blades performance.

**Grade 3** – This blade will have more colouration and visual blemishes, again these will not affect the bats performance. In many cases this willow will be bleached to make it look more attractive.

Happy hunting and hitting.....

Bat maintenance to follow next week.

