

1 **The Impact of All-Rounders and Team Injury Status on Match and Series Success in**  
2 **International Cricket.**

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24 **International Cricket.**

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26 **ABSTRACT**

27 The association between injury status of the team and all-rounders on match outcome were  
28 investigated in international cricketers. Time and non-time loss injuries were recorded over a  
29 32-month period in 47 senior international cricketers. Team injury status was expressed on a  
30 1-4 scale from “fully available” to “unavailable”. Generalised linear model (GLM) was  
31 employed to examine whether team injury status and the injury status of all-rounders (AR)  
32 and single skill (SS) players was associated with the outcome of the match or series. A  
33 significant association between team injury status and match and series outcome was found.  
34 Team mean injury status was 12.0% lower ( $P < 0.001$ ; ES = 1.06) during successful series wins  
35 and 7.8% lower ( $P < 0.001$ ; ES = 0.66) during successful match outcomes. Skill group injury  
36 status was also significantly associated with match ( $P=0.001$ ) and series ( $P=0.001$ ) outcomes  
37 with AR exhibiting greater injury status than SS cricketers ( $P < .001$ , ES = 0.44). All injuries,  
38 irrespective of time lost, influence the outcome of international cricket series’ and matches  
39 with injuries to AR having a greater impact on the results. The findings will impact on the  
40 injury prevention strategies in elite cricket.

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42 **Key Words: Injury and Prevention, Game Analysis, Performance, Non-time loss Injuries**

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49 **INTRODUCTION**

50 International cricket comprises of a high volume and density of matches. Currently, there is  
51 an excess of 400 days of international cricket a year across all Test match playing nations  
52 (McNamara, Gabbett, & Naughton, 2017). A fifth of the annual injury prevalence in fast  
53 bowling may be attributed to high workload (Orchard, Kountouris, & Sims, 2016). While a  
54 plethora of research has been generated in recent years targeting injury  
55 prevention/reduction across all positions, (Ahmun, McCaig, Tallent, Williams, & Gabbett,  
56 2018; Orchard et al., 2015a, 2015b; Warren, Williams, McCaig, & Trewartha, 2018), it is  
57 surprising that the influence of injury status on match outcome has not yet been explored in  
58 cricket.

59

60 Within sport it is commonly accepted that injury will have a negative influence on the success  
61 of an individual or team. Currently, relatively little research exists to support this notion. In  
62 individual sports such as athletics, the loss of training time appears to be a major determinate  
63 of success or failure (Ray Smith and Drew, 2016). Within team sports, there are slightly more  
64 contradictory findings, although the consensus is generally that injury has a negative influence  
65 on the success of the team (Arnason et al., 2004; Dauty and Collon, 2011; Eirale, Tol, Farooq,  
66 Smiley, & Chalabi, 2013; Hagglund et al., 2013; Podlog, Buhler, Pollack, Hopkins, & Burgess,  
67 2015; Ray Smith and Drew, 2016; Williams et al., 2016). Across 11-years, Hagglund, et al.  
68 (2013) showed injuries influenced success in football domestic leagues and European  
69 competition. To date, only injury incidence, time loss or burden have been assessed in studies  
70 investigating the influence and impact of injury on performance. To the best of our  
71 knowledge, these studies have failed to consider non-time-loss injuries.

72

73 The prevalence of non-time-loss injuries exceeds time-loss injuries in sport (Kerr et al., 2017).  
74 Thus, it is suggested that current injury and performance literature does not fully reflect the  
75 impact of injury on sport performance. By nature, cricket is a non-contact sport where  
76 professionals are subject to high workloads, increasing the susceptibility to overuse injuries  
77 (Orchard, Kountouris, et al., 2016). More specifically, the prevalence of non-time loss injuries

78 has been reported as three time higher than time-loss injuries in international cricket batters  
79 and bowlers (Ranson, et al., 2013). It is therefore common for cricketers to train and compete  
80 with injuries. Non-time loss injuries have the potential to compromise fielding position,  
81 technique and potentially performance in cricket (Dutton, Tam, & Gray, 2019). It is therefore  
82 essential that future injury analytical studies should reflect the injury management of  
83 cricketers during competition. However, their impact on match outcome is unknown.

84

85 Injury and team success literature has also focused on the team as an entirety rather than  
86 identifying individual roles within a team. Understanding the impact or the contribution to  
87 success that individual roles or players have, may assist in the management of resources in  
88 injury reduction programmes. The differences in team roles or positions on team success is  
89 yet to be considered. Cricket has specialist single skilled players (batters, fast bowlers, spin  
90 bowlers and wicketkeepers) as well as all-rounders who are selected specifically for both their  
91 batting and bowling ability. Therefore, the injury status of all-rounders could be hypothesised  
92 to have a greater influence on the team success when compared to single skilled cricketers.

93

94 The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of injuries on match and series  
95 outcome in international cricket over a 32 month period. Injuries were recorded in-line with  
96 the recent cricket injury consensus statement (Orchard et al., 2016) and the influence on  
97 match and series outcome analysed. The secondary aim of the study was to analyse the  
98 impact of single skilled (are selected primarily to bat or bowl) to all-rounders (are selected to  
99 bat and bowl) on match and series outcome in international cricket.

100

## 101 **METHODS**

### 102 *Participants and Sample*

103 Forty-seven players (age  $26 \pm 3$  years, stature  $1.84 \pm 0.65$  m, body mass  $84.5 \pm 7.9$  kg) were  
104 involved in the 32 month (29/09/15 – 29/05/18) observational study. Participants included all  
105 players competing for the national team and consisted of 18 batters, 13 fast bowlers, 8

106 spinners, 5 all-rounders and 3 wicketkeepers. Number of matches, series and frequencies of  
107 wins, losses, draws, ties and no results across Tests, One-Day Internationals (ODIs) and  
108 Twenty20 (T20) contests are presented in Table 1. Project approval was gained through the  
109 local ethics committee, in line with the declaration of Helsinki. Participants consented to the  
110 use of this data as part of standard practices.

111 \*\*\*\*Insert Table 1 here\*\*\*\*

### 112 *Injury Data*

113 For international matches, injury status was recorded for each match day by the team's  
114 physiotherapist. To account for medical attention conditions, injury data was recorded in-line  
115 with the recent international cricket consensus statement on injury surveillance (Orchard,  
116 Ranson, et al., 2016). Each player's injury status was recorded on a 1-4 scale:

- 117 1. Fully available for training and matches, with no injury or illness
- 118 2. Fully available for training and matches, but with an injury or illness
- 119 3. Available for selection in a major match, but with modified activity due to injury or  
120 illness
- 121 4. Unavailable for selection in a major match due to injury or illness

122 Time loss injuries were category 4, whilst category 2 and 3 were medical conditions that were  
123 being actively treated and monitored but did not impact the physical availability of the player  
124 in question. These categories included any pre-existing medical conditions.

125

### 126 *Match outcome*

127 Match and series outcome was recorded for all international matches over the 32 month  
128 period (29/09/15 – 29/05/18). Only International Cricket Council sanctioned matches were  
129 included in the analysis. Series were defined as more than a single match. World Cup and  
130 triangular series were included in the analysis and winning series were defined as more  
131 matches won than lost. Test match, One-Day and Twenty20 series were analysed  
132 independently.

133 *Statistics*

134 Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS statistical analysis software (SPSS, version 24,  
135 Chicago, IL), with alpha levels of 0.05 set prior to data analysis. Analyses of the influence of  
136 team injury status and outcomes was split into matches and series with injury status across  
137 each day of the match in series being analysed. Analyses were also split to determine if the  
138 injury status of “All-Rounders” (AR) or “Single Skill” (SS) players influenced the outcome of  
139 matches or series. AR and SS classifications were defined based on whether the player was  
140 selected to ideally contribute as a batter (SS), bowler (SS) or both (AR). Wicketkeepers were  
141 defined as SS cricketers.

142 Generalised linear models were employed to examine whether team injury status and the  
143 injury status of AR and SS players was associated with the outcome of series or matches. Team  
144 injury status was modelled as the dependant variable and initially series or match outcome  
145 (win or loss) were set as factors, with skill group (AR or SS) being added as a covariate once  
146 the influence of team injury status alone had been determined and model fit established. In  
147 all cases, model fit was established via visual inspection.

148 In addition, probabilistic magnitude-based inferences about the true value of outcomes were  
149 employed (Batterham and Hopkins, 2006). Dependent variables were analysed to determine  
150 the effect of the designated condition as the difference in change following each condition.  
151 To calculate the possibility of difference, the smallest worthwhile effect for each dependent  
152 variable was the smallest standardized change in the mean. ie: 0.2 times the between-subject  
153 SD for baseline values of all participants. This method allows practical inferences to be drawn  
154 using the approach identified by Batterham and Hopkins (2006). Furthermore, standardized  
155 effect size (Cohen’s d) analyses were used to interpret the magnitude of any differences  
156 (Cohen, 1992). As inferential statistics were employed here, confidence intervals were set at  
157 90% as this is consistent with an unclear effect having >5% chance of being positive and >5%  
158 chance of being negative.

159 **RESULTS**

160 \*\*\*\*Insert Table 2 here\*\*\*\*

161 The generalised linear mixed model indicated that the outcome of series' and matches were  
162 associated with team injury status (Table 2). Furthermore, the model also indicated that the  
163 injury status of specific skill groups (AR and SS) were associated with the outcome of a match  
164 or series, as presented in Table 2. The details of team injury status' in winning and losing series  
165 and matches are presented in Table 3. Across all matches and series, the injury status of AR  
166 ( $1.50 \pm 0.43$ ) was greater than that of SS ( $1.35 \pm 0.15$ ) players ( $P < .001$ ,  $ES = 0.44$ , 9.6%,  
167 difference possible). Details of the injury status of AR and SS players during winning and losing  
168 matches and series are presented in Table 4.

169 \*\*\*\*Insert Table 3 here\*\*\*\*

170 \*\*\*\*Insert Table 4 here\*\*\*\*

## 171 **DISCUSSION**

172 The main findings of the study show that team injury status influenced the match and series  
173 outcome of international cricket. Furthermore, the AR injury status had an association on the  
174 match outcome when compared to the SS cricketers across all forms of cricket.

175

176 The results (Table 2) of this study agree with findings from previous research which suggests  
177 that injuries have a negative impact on the successful outcome of team performance (Eirale,  
178 et al., 2013; Hagglund, et al., 2013; Williams, et al., 2016). Several possibilities exist for the  
179 reduction in injury incidence or prevalence and improved team performance. The most likely  
180 explanation is the ability of coaches to select an optimal team for each match, increasing the  
181 chance of success (Hagglund, Walden, & Ekstrand, 2009). Further factors such as the  
182 psychological impact of injury can also not be excluded (Ivarsson, Johnson, & Podlog, 2013),  
183 as injuries to teammates can have negative effects on the mental state of the whole team  
184 (Hurley, 2016). Although these results indicate a clear association between injury and  
185 successful outcome, it also needs to be recognised that players spend more time in the field  
186 during Test matches which are lost. This potentially increases the risk of overuse injuries,  
187 particularly to bowlers (Orchard, Kountouris, et al., 2016). Conversely, winning sides often  
188 bowl less and fast bowlers are exposed to less workload. Based on the findings of this study,  
189 winning and losing may therefore directly influence the injury status of the squad.

190

191 This study provides a thorough overview of the impact of injury within international cricket  
192 on performance (table 2). The nature of international cricket is that if a significant long-term  
193 time loss injury occurs, the player will be released from the international squad and return to  
194 their domestic county medical team to be rehabilitated in conjunction with the international  
195 medical staff. As a result, the injury data of this study largely reflects the management and  
196 severity of long-term non-time loss injuries within the current squad. It can therefore be  
197 suggested that less modifications in match roles for players (such as not bowling if the player  
198 is an AR, or fielding in a certain position) as a result of injuries and illnesses will enhance the  
199 success of a professional cricket team.

200

201 The team injury and match results association (Table 2) and lower injury status during winning  
202 matches (Table 3) in this study are similar to those reported in other team sports such as  
203 rugby and football (Hagglund, et al., 2009; Hagglund, et al., 2013; Williams, et al., 2016). While  
204 these sports are largely reliant on synergy between teammates to win, the success of a cricket  
205 team is more likely to occur as a result of several individual performances. Therefore, it seems  
206 appropriate that the injury status of the AR, have a greater influence on the outcome of the  
207 match or series as they are required to contribute to the batting and bowling performance of  
208 the team. As fast bowlers have the highest injury incidence compared to batters, spinners and  
209 wicketkeepers, combining these in a single group may be over simplistic. Therefore, the  
210 importance of skill specific roles (spin bowling, fast bowling, batting) should be determined in  
211 future research. Finally, the importance of the player to the team needs to be acknowledge  
212 in future studies. For example, an AR who is one of the better players in the team may have  
213 a greater influence on the results compared to an AR who is selected to provide balance in  
214 batting and bowling options within the team.

215

216 Professionals working within team sports invest a significant amount of time and resources  
217 into developing an athlete's capacity for load, thus increasing their overall injury resilience  
218 (Thorpe, Atkinson, Drust, & Gregson, 2017). The results of this study suggest that an



219 improvement in team injury status, particularly around AR, will have a positive effect on the  
220 success of a cricket team. Consequently, practitioners should focus a significant amount of  
221 their time, in the management of workloads and injury prevention protocols for AR. This  
222 notion is further supported given that injury status was on average higher during the 32-  
223 month period of observation in the AR when compared to the SS cricketers (Table 4). Thus,  
224 there is a greater capacity to improve the injury status of the AR. However, whether this may  
225 have a negative effect of the injury status of the SS cricketers is unclear.

226

## 227 **CONCLUSION**

228 Injuries to AR and SS cricketers influence the outcome of international cricket matches and  
229 series. Furthermore, injury to AR significantly affects the outcome of matches more than SS  
230 cricketers. Adequate preparation periods that focus on injury and illness preventions  
231 strategies should be planned prior to international tours and domestic competitions. It may  
232 be pertinent to focus available resources and provision of care on AR.

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307 **Table 1.** Total Test, One-Day International (ODI), Twenty20 (T20) series and matches played  
 308 and frequencies of wins, losses, draws, ties and no results (and % of total) over the 32-month  
 309 observational period.

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Win</b>	<b>Loss</b>	<b>Draw</b>	<b>Tie</b>	<b>No result</b>
<b>Series</b>						
<b>Test</b>	8	4 (50.0%)	3 (37.5%)	1 (12.5%)	n/a	n/a
<b>ODI</b>	11	9 (81.8%)	2 (18.2%)	0 (0.0%)	n/a	n/a
<b>T20</b>	4	2 (50.0%)	2 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	n/a	n/a
<b>Matches</b>						
<b>Test</b>	28	12 (42.9%)	12 (42.9%)	4 (14.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>ODI</b>	42	29 (69.0%)	10 (23.8%)	n/a	1 (2.4%)	2 (4.8%)
<b>T20</b>	21	10 (47.6%)	10 (47.6%)	n/a	1 (4.8%)	0 (0.0%)

310

311 **Table 2.** Mean  $\pm$  SD team and skill group injury statuses in series and matches over the 32-  
 312 month observational period, 90% confidence intervals (CI) and generalised linear model  
 313 (GLM) associations with match outcomes are also presented.

314

	Team injury status		GLM <i>P</i> – value ( $\chi^2$ )
	Win (90% CI)	Loss (90% CI)	
<b>Series</b>			
<b>Team</b>	1.41 $\pm$ 0.16 (1.38 - 1.43)	1.60 $\pm$ 0.20 (1.57 - 1.63)	<0.001 (52)
<b>Skill group</b>			
Single Skill	1.38 $\pm$ 0.17 (1.35 - 1.41)	1.58 $\pm$ 0.19 (1.55 - 1.62)	0.001 (48)
All rounder	1.45 $\pm$ 0.43 (1.39 - 1.52)	1.67 $\pm$ 0.50 (1.59 - 1.76)	
<b>Match</b>			
<b>Team</b>	1.42 $\pm$ 0.16 (1.39 - 1.44)	1.54 $\pm$ 0.21 (1.50 - 1.57)	0.017 (11)
<b>Skill group</b>			
Single Skill	1.38 $\pm$ 0.18 (1.35 - 1.41)	1.51 $\pm$ 0.20 (1.48 - 1.55)	0.001 (8.83)
All rounder	1.50 $\pm$ 0.41 (1.43 - 1.57)	1.62 $\pm$ 0.52 (1.53 - 1.70)	

315

316

317 **Table 3.** Mean  $\pm$  SD team injury statuses and differences between winning and losing series  
 318 and matches over the 32-month observational period. Percentage differences ( $\Delta\%$ ), Cohen's  
 319 D effect sizes, magnitude based inference (MBI) are also presented.

Team injury status		$\Delta\%$	<i>P</i> - Value	Effect size	MBI qualitative inference
Win	Loss				
<b>Series</b>					
1.41 $\pm$ 0.16	1.60 $\pm$ 0.20	12.0	<.001	1.06	Effect very likely
<b>Match</b>					
1.42 $\pm$ 0.16	1.54 $\pm$ 0.21	7.8	<.001	0.66	Effect likely

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321

322 **Table 4.** Mean  $\pm$  SD skill group injury statuses and differences in injury status between Single  
 323 Skill players and All-Rounders in winning and losing series and matches over the 32-month  
 324 observational period. Percentage differences ( $\Delta\%$ ), Cohen's D effect sizes, magnitude based  
 325 inference (MBI) are also presented.

Injury status		$\Delta\%$	P - Value	Effect size	MBI qualitative inference
Single Skill	All-Rounder				
<b>Series – win</b>					
1.38 $\pm$ 0.17	1.45 $\pm$ 0.43	5.5	0.042	0.43	Effect possible
<b>Series – loss</b>					
1.58 $\pm$ 0.19	1.67 $\pm$ 0.50	5.6	0.057	0.44	Effect possible
<b>Match – win</b>					
1.38 $\pm$ 0.18	1.50 $\pm$ 0.41	8.3	<0.001	0.49	Effect possible
<b>Match – loss</b>					
1.51 $\pm$ 0.20	1.62 $\pm$ 0.52	6.8	<0.001	0.46	Effect possible

326