

When dealing with LBW the umpire must consider 4 questions and, in order to be able to give the batsman out, must answer them all in the affirmative. In this article we will deal with each question as it happens on the field thus ending up with a logical approach to the appeal. For ease we will assume that the delivery was fair (a batsman cannot be out LBW from a no ball).

Question 1 - Did the ball pitch between wicket & wicket or on the off side?

On the diagram above the only deliveries which are able to get the batsman out LBW are the ones in the green and blue sectors. The green sector is the area between wicket & wicket whilst the blue one represents the off side.

Provided the ball pitches somewhere in either of these sectors then the batsman is possibly going to be given out. The final decision will depend on the answers to the other 3 questions which we will consider in turn.

If the ball pitches in the pink area - i.e. outside the leg stump - the batsman cannot be given out LBW.

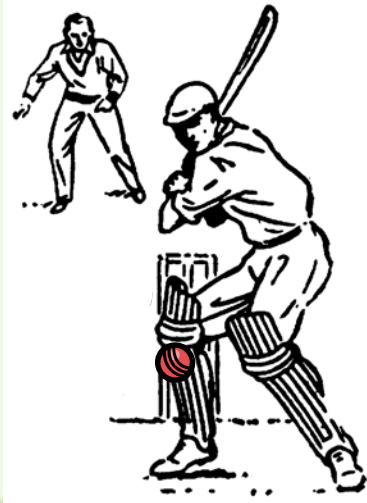
A ball pitching in line with leg stump has pitched between wicket & wicket and therefore would fall into the green sector.

Provided the answer to our question is YES then we can proceed to the next one.

If the answer is NO then the batsman is NOT OUT and no further considerations need be made.

LAW 36 - LBW

2. Was the 1st point of interception the striker's person or equipment and not the bat?



Question 2 - Was the 1st point of interception the striker's person or equipment and not the bat?

This is fairly straightforward and simply means that the umpire must be sure that the **FIRST** contact that the ball made was on the person or equipment of the striker. If the ball first made contact with the bat and then subsequently made contact with the striker's person or equipment then he cannot be given out LBW.

This is easily seen in the example above where the bat is nowhere near the ball but when the batsman plays the ball with his bat and the bat and pad are very close to each other - e.g. a forward defensive shot - then it is not always easy to detect which the ball hit first.

Any contact with the bat **BEFORE** the ball hits the person or equipment means that the answer to our question is **NO** and the batsman is not out LBW.

If the umpire is sure that the **FIRST** contact was the person or equipment then the answer to our question is **YES** and the batsman is still vulnerable to be given out (again, depending on the answers to the next 2 questions).

LAW 36 - LBW

3. Was that 1st interception
between wicket & wicket?



Batsman **MAKING** a
genuine attempt to hit the
ball with the bat.

off side

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The next question is divided into 2 parts and the answer is totally dependent upon what action the striker took when dealing with the delivery. He basically has 2 options when dealing with a delivery - he can either make a genuine attempt to hit the ball using his bat or he can decide to ignore the bat and simply play the ball with his person or equipment. The question and therefore the answer differ depending upon which option he takes.

Let us deal with the option in which he **DOES** make a genuine attempt to hit the ball with the bat but he misses it.

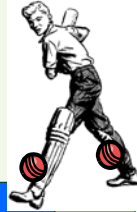
Question 3a - Was that 1st interception (in question 2) between wicket & wicket?

Provided that the batsman has attempted to hit the ball using his bat then the interception which took place in question 2 has to be between wicket & wicket i.e in the **green** sector - as in the example above the ball on the right has been intercepted in the **green** area and therefore the batsman is vulnerable to being given out LBW. Therefore the answer to our question is YES and we progress to the last question.

However the ball in the **blue** sector has been intercepted outside the off stump and therefore the batsman cannot be given out. The same would apply if the interception took place outside the leg stump - NOT OUT. Since the answer to our question is NO the batsman is NOT OUT and we ignore the last question.

LAW 36 - LBW

3. Was that 1st interception
between wicket & wicket
or on the off side?



Batsman **NOT** making a
genuine attempt to hit the
ball with the bat.

off side

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Now let us deal with the situation where the striker makes no attempt to hit the ball with his bat but simply uses his person or equipment to stop the ball.

Question 3b - Was that 1st interception (in question 2) between wicket & wicket OR on the off side?

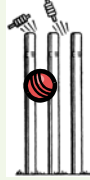
In this case, because the batsman has not attempted to use his bat his area of vulnerability is larger.

As in the previous slide he is still liable to be given out from the right hand ball which is intercepted in the **green** area, but this time he is also vulnerable from the ball which has hit him in the **blue** area - i.e. outside the off stump.

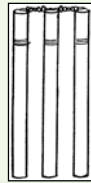
So, in the slide above, the answer to our question is YES on both occasions and so we have to progress to the last question to see if our batsman is going to be given out.

LAW 36 - LBW

4. Had the ball NOT been intercepted,



in the UMPIRE'S opinion, would the ball have hit the wicket?



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The first 3 questions should be easily answered by the umpire because they are events that actually happened. Provided that the umpire is concentrating then he should not make an error with the facts **that he saw**. The final question is not a question of fact but of opinion and therefore is more difficult to explain.

Question 4 - Had the ball not been intercepted, in the umpire's opinion, would it have gone on to hit the wicket?

Since it never happened the answer to this question has to remain with the umpire and it is he who has to make that judgement.

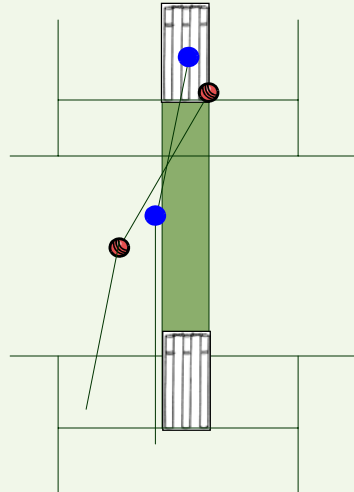
And, let's be honest, to some extent it is guesswork. However, with all the information that the umpire has before him it is **educated** guesswork - and therefore should be a reasonably accurate assessment based on what happened PRIOR to the ball being intercepted, and what COULD have happened had it not been.

So let us look at the various pieces of information which are available to the umpire which, when analysed, can help him make that final judgement.

LAW 36 - LBW

4. Would the ball have hit the wicket?

- this is the UMPIRE'S opinion
- angle of delivery
- did ball deviate after pitching?



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Angle of delivery and what the ball did after pitching

In the above example the ball on the right was delivered very close to the stumps and therefore does not have to deviate much after pitching in order to fulfil the criteria laid down in the law.

It went down the pitch in a straight line and pitched outside off stump. It deviated so that any interception would have been between wicket & wicket. It would not have had to deviate much in order to have hit the stumps. This small amount of deviation would make it relatively easy for the umpire to decide if it would have gone on to hit the wicket.

However, the ball on the left has to deviate a lot more in order to be intercepted between wicket & wicket and then go on and hit it. The amount of deviation needed to achieve this is so great that it would be very difficult for the umpire to judge whether or not the ball would have hit the wicket.

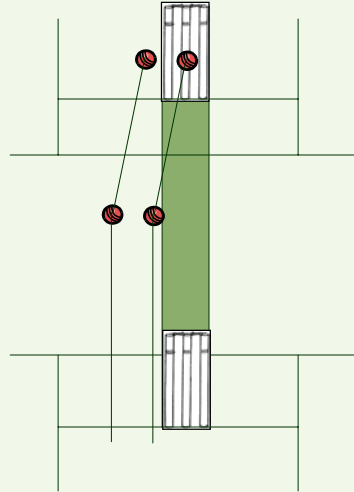
All we are saying here is that, when dealing with a straight ball which deviates off the pitch, **in general terms**, the wider the ball is delivered in relation to the bowler's end wicket, the more it has to do in order to fulfil the criteria of the law and this makes any judgement by the umpire that much harder. The closer the ball is delivered the less it needs to do and so the umpire's judgement is made easier.

LAW 36 - LBW

4. Would the ball have hit the wicket?

- this is the UMPIRE'S opinion
- angle of delivery
- did ball deviate after pitching?
 - - and by how much?

Same delivery, delivered from
2 different angles



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Angle of delivery and what the ball did after pitching

In the above example the delivery has been copied to show what happens when the **same** delivery is bowled from 2 different positions.

The deviation is fairly small and, for the delivery on the left, is insufficient for it to hit the wicket.

However, the same delivery when bowled from close to the stumps does fulfil the criteria of the law and would have hit the wicket.

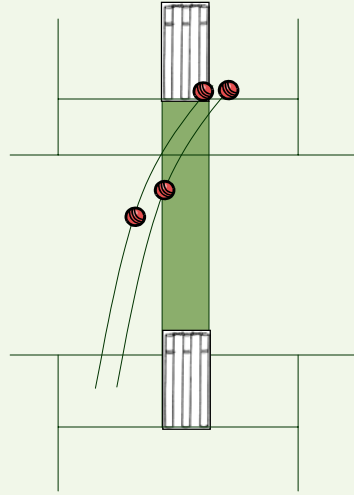
The point to be made here is that the umpire must stay alert to where the bowler delivers the ball from. He must not assume that the bowler will always deliver the ball from the same spot each time.

Also, please note that every delivery is different and therefore needs to be judged on its own merits. Just because a bowler is turning the ball a lot does not mean that every ball is going to react the same way. He may bowl several overs of balls that turn a lot but may then bowl his 'arm' ball which does not turn at all. If the umpire has pre-judged that this bowler will never hit the wicket because he is turning the ball too much he may well miss the straight one and give an incorrect decision.

LAW 36 - LBW

4. Would the ball have hit the wicket?

- this is the UMPIRE'S opinion
- angle of delivery
- did ball swing in the air?
 - - and by how much?



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Angle of delivery and what the ball did after pitching

In this example the ball was not straight but was an in-swinger. Again the amount of swing and what the ball would have done after pitching need careful consideration.

The left hand ball has been delivered wider of the stumps and if intercepted on or after the popping crease would have been a candidate for LBW. The right hand ball, if intercepted anytime after it had pitched would, at first glance, appear to be a case of out LBW, BUT the amount of swing on the ball would, in fact, have taken it passed the leg stump.

The point to be made here is that any swinging delivery needs careful consideration before a decision is made. At first glance, and at normal speed, the right hand ball would seem to be the one that is out and the left hand one not out. **But, on closer inspection the reverse is actually true.**

LAW 36 - LBW

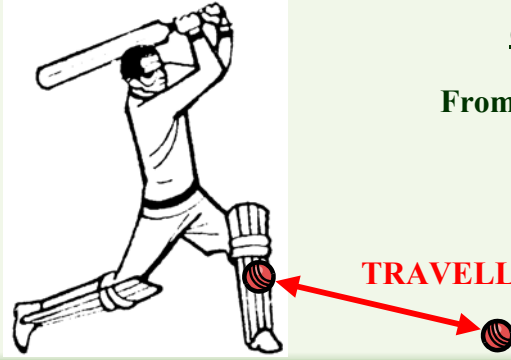
4. Would the ball have hit the wicket?

How far in front of batsman
did the ball pitch?

From where ball pitched to the
point of interception

is the

TRAVELLING DISTANCE



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Travelling distance

This vital piece of information is probably the most significant when deciding an LBW decision.

From where the ball pitched, in front of the batsman, to where it actually makes contact with him is known as **travelling distance** (indicated by arrow in the diagram).

This can vary from delivery to delivery.

The reason it is important is that during this distance the umpire should be able to see something of the ball's path after pitching and before interception.

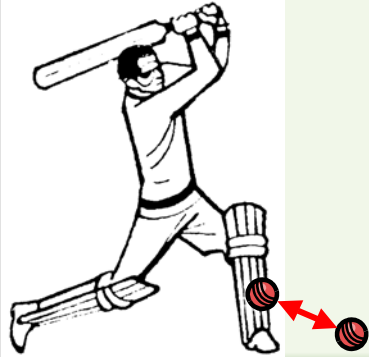
Was this path that the ball was taking straight? Did it spin? - if so, to what degree? Did it deviate off the seam? - again, to what degree?.

Any such movement or deviation helps the umpire decide on the ball's **future path**.

After any spin, swing or movement that was detected the ball would have carried on along that same path, but for the interception. So all the umpire has to do is envisage where that path would have taken the ball in relation to the wicket.

LAW 36 - LBW

TRAVELLING DISTANCE



The faster the bowler the more travelling distance you need.

The time taken to travel this distance is so important.

Umpire needs to see any movement in the air/off the pitch

The faster the ball the harder it is to detect this movement

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Travelling distance - continued

As can be seen from the diagram this distance can vary and the closer the ball pitches to the batsman - in other words the shorter the travelling distance the umpire sees - the harder it is for him to make a judgement as to the ball's future path.

The speed of the ball is also important. The faster the ball is travelling the quicker it will cover this distance.

Put these 2 factors together and we come up with the fact that the faster the delivery the more travelling distance the umpire needs.

It is the TIME taken to cover this distance that makes the difference. A fast delivery will take less time to cover a distance of 8 feet than a slow off break. The amount of **time** that the umpire has to watch the ball will dictate how accurately he can estimate its future path. The more time he has, and therefore the greater the travelling distance, the easier this prediction becomes.




LAW 36 - LBW

TRAVELLING DISTANCE

There are **NO** statutory distances for any speed of bowling

Depends on individual umpire's experience/ability

as a rough guide:

 fast bowler	6 – 8 feet
 medium pace bowler	4 – 6 feet
 slow bowler	2 – 4 feet

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Travelling distance - continued

Having fully understood the relationship between the **physical** distance and that of the **time** taken to cover that distance we need to give some indication of what is an acceptable distance for different types of bowling.

The table below is meant as a guide for inexperienced umpires so that they can be guided as to what distances they should be looking for. The figures given are NOT statutory in any way, shape or form - they are simply a guide. If the umpire feels that he has had enough time and has been able to see the path the ball was taking during any period of travelling distance then he is allowed to make his judgement accordingly, even though the travelling distance falls outside these figures. Experience will soon lead each individual umpire to know what is acceptable to him and what is not.

Fast delivery	-	6 - 8 feet (2 - 3 metres)
Medium paced	-	4 - 6 feet (1.25 - 2 metres)
Slow delivery	-	2 - 4 feet (0.75 - 1 metre)

(metric conversion is only approximate)

LAW 36 - LBW

POINT OF INTERCEPTION

At the point of interception:

- **how much further did the ball have to travel in order to hit the wicket?**
- **the further this distance is, the more difficult it is for the umpire to BE CERTAIN that the ball would have gone on to hit the wicket**

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Point of interception

There is now another factor for the umpire to be considered in connection with this delivery and is best expressed as a question.

At the point where the ball was intercepted how much further did it have to travel in order for it to hit the wicket?

Basically, the further this distance is the more difficult it is for the umpire to be certain that the ball would have gone on to hit the wicket.

This is best illustrated by looking at the next two slides.

LAW 36 - LBW

PLAYING FORWARD



Point of interception is 6-7 feet from wicket

assuming any movement in the air/off the pitch PRIOR to impact continues on that same path

6-7 feet of further movement makes it difficult to judge

whether the ball would have hit the wicket

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Playing forward

By playing forward the batsman above has her front foot some 6 - 7 feet (2 - 2.25 metres) in front of the wicket.

The umpire has to monitor the path of the ball as it makes its way towards the wicket and has to try and ignore the fact that it has been interrupted on its journey. He has to try and predict whether the path it was taking would, but for the interception, have taken it onto the stumps.

The fact that the ball would still have 6 - 7 feet to travel after this interruption in its journey makes it very difficult for the umpire to judge whether or not it would have hit them.

This would be especially so if there had been any spin or movement off the seam for that particular delivery. Trying to envisage the path of a swinging or spinning ball over a distance of 7 feet is difficult. Add to that the fact that the umpire has to decide if it would have hit a target of 28.5" x 9" and we can see that the judgement is difficult - note that we say it is difficult but NOT impossible. Many a batsman has been given out playing forward or 'on the front foot' as it is termed and that is perfectly correct if the umpire is quite happy that, from what he has seen, the ball would have gone on to hit the wicket.

LAW 36 - LBW

PLAYING BACK

Point of interception is 4 feet from wicket

assuming any movement in the air/off the pitch PRIOR to impact continues on that same path

4 feet of further movement makes it easier to judge

whether the ball would have hit the wicket



Playing back

The illustration here depicts our batsman playing a rather woeful defensive shot to the delivery, but nevertheless does show us how much easier a decision for LBW is when the batsman plays back.

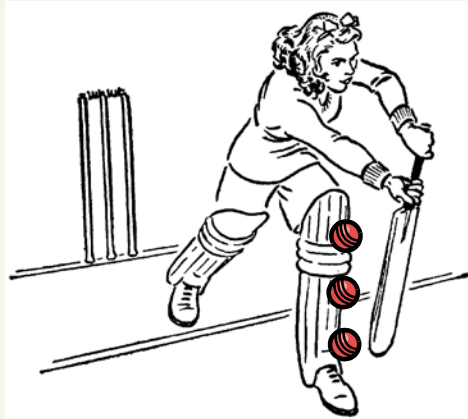
In this illustration our batsman is on the popping crease when he intercepts the ball which means that the ball would only have 4 feet (1.25 metres) to travel to reach the wicket.

As in the previous example the umpire has to assume that the path the ball took, after pitching and before interception, would have been the same had it not hit our gentleman's pad. The fact that the ball would only have 4 feet to travel before it reaches the stumps makes it a much easier judgement to make.

We must stress that the above example is not automatically going to be out because it would depend on the path of the ball as to whether it would have hit the wicket e.g. if it was spinning viciously towards leg or the off side then the judgement may well be that it would have missed the wicket. All this slide illustrates is that the judgement is made easier by the fact that the batsman has played back and therefore the ball has a relatively short distance to travel in order to reach the wicket.

LAW 36 - LBW

How high was the interception?



Would the ball have gone over the top of the wicket?



How high was the interception?

So far we have tended to concentrate on any spin, swing or movement off the seam -i.e. any lateral or sideways movement the ball has taken.

Whilst this is important there is another consideration which the umpire must make before allowing himself the luxury of giving a decision.

And that is the height at which the ball was intercepted.

Using our two batsmen we can see that the height at which the ball is intercepted will also determine whether or not it would have hit the stumps. In each example above the question of height will apply and it will depend on the path of the ball as to whether it would go over the top of the stumps. In the top delivery to each player, if the ball is rising as it hits the pads then there is a good case for judging that it would have gone over the top of the stumps. However, if it was a slow delivery which was dropping down as it hit them then our judgement may well be the opposite.

LAW 36 - LBW

Would the ball have gone over the top of the wicket?

Condition of pitch/ball:

- soft pitch &/or old ball - ball keeps lower??
- hard pitch &/or new ball - more bounce??

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The whole point about height is that it must be considered in addition to all the other aspects we have discussed. The amount of spin, swing or movement off the seam PLUS the height at which the ball was intercepted must all be considered together.

It is often helpful to look at the state of the pitch and ball when umpiring a game because they may well play a significant role in how many LBW decisions you will be required to make. **In general terms** a soft pitch and an old softer ball will mean that the ball will keep low and may well test your judgement capabilities to the limit. However, a rock hard pitch and new ball will invariably mean that the ball will bounce a lot more and may well go over the top of the stumps on most occasions. We say 'generally' because each pitch and ball are different and can always do things which surprise us so don't take the last comment as a literal fact but rather as a guide.

One last point on height is that the ball can be intercepted anywhere on the body even to the extent of it being intercepted above the level of the stumps. It is not impossible when a batsman is down on one knee playing a sweep shot, and he misses the ball, that he may be hit when the ball is above the level of the stumps. This does not debar him from being out LBW because if the ball is dropping, or is going to drop before it reaches the stumps, then the umpire may well decide that such a drop in height may mean that it would have hit the wicket.

LAW 36 - LBW

THE FULL TOSS

- a ball intercepted outside leg stump is deemed to have **PITCHED** outside leg stump & cannot be out LBW
- for a full toss, the ball's flight is **VITAL** information
 - was it straight?
 - was it an in-swinger?
 - was it an out-swinger?

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The full toss

When the ball is intercepted on the full the questions regarding where the ball pitched and where it was intercepted (questions 1 and 3) become linked together and therefore it follows that a ball which is intercepted on the full outside leg stump elicits a NO answer to both these questions and therefore the batsman is not out.

When dealing with the full toss it becomes even more paramount that the umpire keeps a careful eye on what the ball does as it travels down the pitch towards the wicket i.e. what path it is taking before it is intercepted. All the umpire has to do is imagine how this path would have continued had it not been interrupted.

So, if the ball was travelling in a straight line before it was intercepted, the umpire would expect that it would have kept going straight had it not been interrupted in its journey towards the wicket.

Similarly, a swinging ball would have continued to swing along its same path had it not been stopped from doing so by the interception.

LAW 36 - LBW

Law 36.2(b) Interception of the ball:

When judging a ball intercepted
on the FULL

● path of the ball
BEFORE interception

● would be the same
AFTER interception

irrespective of whether or not it
would have subsequently pitched



NOT OUT

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The full toss

So, let's look at an example.

In the illustration above the ball is swinging inwards and is intercepted on the full in front of the stumps.

So far it has met all the criteria for an LBW

- it has pitched between wicket & wicket (it has 'pitched' on the batsman's pads)
- it has been intercepted between wicket & wicket and
- the batsman was attempting to hit it.

But, had it not been intercepted, the ball would have continued to swing along the same path that it was already taking which would take it passed the leg stump. So, the batsman cannot be out since the ball would never have actually hit the stumps.

LAW 36 - LBW

Law 36.2(b) Interception of the ball:

When judging a ball intercepted
on the FULL **any prospective**

- spin
- turn
- deviation

off the pitch is **IGNORED**



OUT

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The full toss

In this example the path of the ball, before it was intercepted, was straight. Therefore, had it not been stopped by the batsman's foot, the umpire has to assume that it would have continued along that same straight line and would have hit the wicket.

The fact that the ball would/may have pitched on the ground and may have taken some deviation through spin, or the roughness of the ground, due to that pitching **IS OF NO INTEREST** to the umpire. He does not have to guess the amount of deviation that the ball may have taken due to this imaginary pitching. All the umpire is concerned with is the path of the ball before it was intercepted and then mentally extend that path to judge whether it would have taken the ball onto the wicket.

However, when dealing with the full toss situation the other factors which we have discussed still apply:

- how far had the ball to travel in order to reach the wicket? - the further this is the more difficult it is to make that judgement
- how high was the interception - would the ball have gone over the top of the stumps? and so on.

LAW 36 - LBW

Law 36.3 Off side of the wicket:

The off side of the wicket is determined by the striker's stance at the moment the ball comes into play for that delivery

(covers the reverse sweep & a striker changing from right to left hand - or vice versa - during bowler's run up)

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The off side of the wicket

This is put into the law to help the umpire decide at what stage the leg side and off side are determined for each delivery.

A batsman may take any action in order to play the delivery and that may mean turning his body so that he is facing in a different direction from when the bowler delivered the ball.

The reverse sweep is a good example of a batsman changing the position of the leg side after the bowler has delivered the ball. Another would be when a right handed batsman switches hands and therefore his stance, to play the ball left handed (after the bowler has delivered the ball) - quite legitimate but it does cause confusion when deciding what is the leg side after any such movement.

The law now stipulates that once the ball comes into play for that delivery i.e. the bowler starts his run up or delivery action where he has no run up, then the off and leg side are determined by the batsman's stance at that point in time. Any subsequent movement by the batsman does not alter the position of the leg or off side for the remainder of that delivery.

LAW 36 - LBW

Summary:

*(Batsman **MAKING** a genuine attempt to hit the ball)*

1. Did the ball PITCH:

● in line between wicket & wicket ● or on the off side?

2. Was the FIRST point of interception the striker's:

● person ● equipment (not the bat etc.)

3. Was that point of impact in line between wicket and wicket?

4. In the umpire's opinion, would the ball have gone on to hit the wicket?

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Summary

For a batsman **MAKING** a genuine attempt to hit the ball with his bat.

This slide speaks for itself and is a summary of the 4 questions which the umpire must answer in the affirmative in order to give the batsman out LBW.

If any of the questions receive a NO answer then the batsman cannot be given out LBW.

LAW 36 - LBW

Summary:

*(Batsman **NOT** making a genuine attempt to hit the ball)*

1. Did the ball PITCH:

in line between wicket & wicket or on the off side?

2. Was the FIRST point of interception the striker's:

person equipment (not the bat etc.)

**3. Was that point of impact in line between wicket and wicket
or on the off-side?**

**4. In the umpire's opinion, would the ball have gone
on to hit the wicket?**

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Summary

For a batsman **NOT** making a genuine attempt to hit the ball with his bat.

This slide speaks for itself and is a summary of the 4 questions which the umpire must answer in the affirmative in order to give the batsman out LBW.

If any of the questions receive a NO answer then the batsman cannot be given out LBW.