

EVERY BASE COVERED

GAVIN YOUNG FROM OWZAT-CRICKET TAKES US THROUGH HIS TIPS FOR HOW TO GET STARTED IN CRICKET



2019 will be remembered as the year that the nation fell back in love with cricket. Parents with a reignited passion for the game dusted off their old pads and took their children to buy their first set.

However, there will be many children inspired to take up the sport who don't come from a cricketing family. They will beg their parents to buy them the same bat as Jos Buttler and these parents may end up spending hundreds of pounds on a piece of equipment, none the wiser that there are bats half the price, the same quality and may aide the child's development.

The Cricketer spoke to Gavin Young from Owzat-Cricket to help us navigate this minefield of buying youth equipment. Young, a talented cricketer and expert in cricket equipment, is better placed than any on what to buy and how much you should be paying for it.

BATS

An eight-year-old who has just seen England win the World Cup on TV may be desperate to get involved despite having never played the game, often with parents that haven't played either - and that's where Owzat can help. But would a child that age even know what hand to use when facing up? Because your writing hand isn't always your batting hand.

"We have a few tricks to find out," Young tells The Cricketer. "We hand them a bat and see which hand they naturally put on the bottom. You will also see which shoulder they naturally face orwards."

"A right-hander will have their right hand lower on the handle and face their left shoulder forwards."

The size of the bat is next, and every child wants to hit the ball out of the park like Eoin Morgan, but that doesn't mean they need a bat the size of Morgan's.

"Youngsters have got to learn technique first before they think about the big shots, and it is far easier to learn these shots with a lighter bat.

"What we do is get them to hold the bat

perpendicular to their body with their weaker hand. If the arm shakes uncontrollably or they go red in the face then the bat is too heavy!"

If buying online, Owzat-Cricket's size guide is a brilliant tool which suggests the perfect bat size based on the child's age and height.

"For those buying their first cricket bat we would recommend Kashmir Willow at around £30, or English Willow around the £50-£60 mark if needing size 4 and above. Youngsters tend to want the same brand as their favourite player and we can accommodate starter bats for all the major brands."

HELMETS

Safety is the most important thing when it comes to youth cricket. The ball is just as hard as the one the professionals use and with shortened pitches deliveries can rise to near head-height. But Owzat have this covered.

"There isn't a helmet in our shop that isn't tested to the latest British safety standard. Regardless of brand or price, every single helmet we sell will protect your child.

"The grill is also no longer adjustable on any new helmet and are factory fitted into position. This ensures the ball doesn't sneak through the gap."

This is sure to provide a lot of comfort to parents who are faced with helmets that vary between £30 and £60 in price.

After protection, comfort is important and there is no substitute to trying the helmet on for yourself in shop. However, the online size guide does give accurate recommendations. And with dials or adjustable padding on all helmets you can ensure it fits and lasts more than one season as the user grows.

PROTECTION

Some professionals arrive at the crease and you aren't sure what part of their body doesn't have some sort of padding. But are chest guards and multiple thigh pads necessary for youth cricket?

"The minimum a youngster needs starting out is pads, gloves, helmet and a box. Specialist cricket footwear is slightly less important because children can just wear normal trainers."

The size guide is great but, again, there is no substitute for the in-shop expertise. "We can tell pretty quickly what size pads to start a youngster off with.

"Bat and equipment sizes are consistent across all brands. A starter set of pads can be £25 with gloves coming in at £15."

BAGS

All this kit needs to be stored somewhere, and the trend is moving away from wheelies.

"Manufacturers have recognised that backpacks and small duffles are the way to go because they are easier to transport and everything remains upright. And if your bat doesn't fit, the handle just sticks out the top rather than having to carry it.

"For a young player, the simpler the bag the better. They will only lose things if the bags have too many pockets. £30 will get you a top quality bag that will store your kit." 

